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THE TORCH-BEARERS

by

ALFRED NOYES

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THE TORCH-BEARERS

PART I.—WATCHERS OF THE SKY

PROLOGUE: THE OBSERVATORY

At noon, upon the mountain's purple height,
Above the pine-woods and the clouds it shone
No larger than the small white dome of shell
Left by the fledgling wren when wings are born.
By night it joined the company of heaven,
And, with its constant light, became a star.
A needle-point of light, minute, remote,
It sent a subtler message through the abyss,
Held more significance for the seeing eye
Than all the darkness that would blot it out,
Yet could not dwarf it.
High in heaven it shone,
Alive with all the thoughts, and hopes, and dreams
Of man's adventurous mind
Up there, I knew
The explorers of the sky, a quiet throng
Of pioneers, made ready to attack
That darkness once again, and win new worlds.
To-morrow night they hoped to crown the toil
Of twenty years, and turn upon the sky
The noblest weapon ever made by man.
War had delayed them. They had been drawn away
Designing darker weapons. But no gun
Could outrange this.

" To-morrow night "—so wrote their chief—" we try
Our great new telescope, the hundred-inch.
Your Milton's ' optic tube ' has grown in power
Since Galileo, famous, blind, and old,
Talked with him, in that darkness, of the sky.
We creep to power by inches. Europe trusts
Her ' giant forty ' still. Even to-night
Our own old sixty has its work to do ;
And now our hundred-inch . . . I hardly dare
To think what this new muzzle of ours may find.
Come up, and spend that night among the stars
Here, on our mountain-top. If all goes well,
Then, at the least, my friend, you'll see a moon
Stranger, but nearer, many a thousand mile
Than earth has ever seen her, even in dreams.
As for the stars, if seeing them were all,
Three thousand million new-found points of light
Is our rough guess. But never speak of this.
You know our press. They'd miss the one result
To flash ' three thousand million ' round the world."
To-morrow night ! For more than twenty years
They had thought and planned and worked.
 Ten years had gone,
One-fourth, or more, of man's brief working-life,
Before they made those solid tons of glass,
Their hundred-inch reflector, the clear pool,
The polished flawless pool that it must be
To hold the perfect image of a star.
And, even now, some secret flaw—none knew
Until to-morrow's test—might waste it all.
Where was the gambler that would stake so much,—
Time, patience, treasure, on a single throw ?
The cost of it,—they'd not find that again,
Either in gold or life-stuff ! All their youth
Was fuel to the flame of this one work.

Once in a lifetime to the man of science,
Despite what fools believe his ice-cooled blood,
There comes this drama.
If he fails, he fails
Utterly. He at least will have no time
For fresh beginnings. Other men, no doubt,
Years hence, will use the footholes that he cut
In those precipitous cliffs, and reach the height,
But he will never see it.
So for me,
The light words of that letter seemed to hide
The passion of a lifetime, and I shared
The crowning moment of its hope and fear.

Next day, through whispering aisles of palm we rode
Up to the foot-hills, dreaming desert-hills
That to assuage their own delicious drought
Had set each tawny sun-kissed slope ablaze
With peach and orange orchards.
Up and up,
Along the thin white trail that wound and climbed
And zig-zagged through the grey-green mountain sage,
The car went crawling, till the shining plain
Below it, like an airman's map, unrolled.
Houses and orchards dwindled to white specks
In midget cubes and squares of tufted green.
Once, as we rounded one steep curve, that made
The head swim at the canyoned gulf below,
We saw through thirty miles of lucid air
Elvishly small, sharp as a crumpled petal
Blown from the stem, a yard away, a sail
Lazily drifting on the warm blue sea.
Up for nine miles along that spiral trail
Slowly we wound to reach the lucid height
Above the clouds, where that white dome of shell,

No wren's now, but an eagle's, took the flush
Of dying day. The sage-brush all died out,
And all the southern growths, and round us now,
Firs of the north, and strong, storm-rooted pines
Exhaled a keener fragrance ; till, at last,
Reversing all the laws of lesser hills,
They towered like giants round us. Darkness fell
Before we reached the mountain's naked height.

Over us, like a great cathedral dome,
The observatory loomed against the sky ;
And the dark mountain with its headlong gulfs
Had lost all memory of the world below ;
For all those cloudless throngs of glittering stars,
And all those glimmerings where the abyss of space
Is powdered with a milky dust, each grain
A burning sun, and every sun the lord
Of its own darkling planets,—all those lights
Met, in a darker deep, the lights of earth,
Lights on the sea, lights of invisible towns,
Trembling and indistinguishable from stars,
In those black gulfs around the mountain's feet.
Then, into the glimmering dome, with bated breath,
We entered, and, above us, in the gloom
Saw that majestic weapon of the light
Uptowering like the shaft of a huge gun
Through one arched rift of sky.
Dark at its base
With naked arms, the crew that all day long
Had sweated to make ready for this night
Waited their captain's word.
The switchboard shone
With elfin lamps of white and red, and keys
Whence, at a finger's touch, that monstrous tube
Moved like a creature dowered with life and will,

To peer from deep to deep.
Below it pulsed
The clock-machine that slowly, throb by throb,
Timed to the pace of the revolving earth,
Drove the titanic muzzle on and on,
Fixed to the chosen star that else would glide
Out of its field of vision.
So, set free,
Balanced against the wheel of time, it swung,
Or rested, while, to find new realms of sky
The dome that housed it, like a moon revolved,
So smoothly that the watchers hardly knew
They moved within ; till, through the glimmering doors,
They saw the dark procession of the pines
Like Indian warriors, quietly stealing by.

Then, at a word, the mighty weapon dipped
Its muzzle and aimed at one small point of light,
One seeming insignificant star.
The chief,
Mounting the ladder, while we held our breath,
Looked through the eye-piece.
Then we heard him laugh
His thanks to God, and hide it in a jest.
" A prominence on Jupiter ! "—
They laughed,
" What do you mean ? "—" It's moving," cried the chief,
They laughed again, and watched his glimmering face
High overhead against that moving tower.
" Come up and see, then ! "
One by one they went,
And, though each laughed as he returned to earth,
Their souls were in their eyes.
Then I, too, looked,
And saw that insignificant spark of light

Touched with new meaning, beautifully reborn,
A swimming world, a perfect rounded pearl,
Poised in the violet sky ; and, as I gazed,
I saw a miracle,—right on its upmost edge
A tiny mound of white that slowly rose,
Then, like an exquisite seed-pearl, swung quite clear
And swam in heaven above its parent world
To greet its three bright sister-moons.
A moon,
Of Jupiter, no more, but clearer far
Than mortal eyes had seen before from earth.
Beautiful, keen and clear beyond all dreams
Was that one silver phrase of the starry tune
Which Galileo's " old discoverer " first
Dimly revealed, dissolving into clouds
The imagined fabric of our universe.
" *Jupiter stands in heaven and will stand*
Though all the sycophants bark at him," he cried,
Hailing the truth before he, too, went down,
Whelmed in the cloudy wreckage of that dream.

So one by one we looked, the men who served
Urania, and the men from Vulcan's forge.
A beautiful eagerness in the darkness lit
The swarthy faces that too long had missed
A meaning in the dull mechanic maze
Of labour on this blind earth, but found it now.
Though only a moment's wandering melody
Hopelessly far above, it gave their toil
Its only consecration and its joy.
There, with dark-smouldering eyes and naked throats,
Blue-dungareed, red-shirted, grimed and smeared
With engine-grease and sweat, they gathered round
The foot of that dim ladder ; each muttering low,
As he came down, his wonder at what he saw

To those who waited,—a picture for the brush
Of Rembrandt, lighted only by the rift
Above them, where the giant muzzle thrust
Out through the dim arched roof, and slowly throbbed,
Against the slowly moving wheel of the earth,
Holding their chosen star.
There, like an elf,
Perched on the side of that dark slanting tower,
The Italian mechanician watched the moons
That Italy discovered.
One by one,
English, American, French, and Dutch, they climbed
To see the wonder that their own blind hands
Had helped to achieve.
At midnight while they paused
To adjust the clock-machine, I wandered out
Alone, into the silence of the night.
The silence ? On that lonely height I heard
Eternal voices ;
For, as I looked into the gulf beneath,
Whence almost all the lights had vanished now,
The whole dark mountain seemed to have lost its earth
And to be sailing like a ship through heaven.
All round it surged the mighty sea-like sound
Of soughing pine-woods, one vast ebb and flow
Of absolute peace, aloof from all earth's pain,
So calm, so quiet, it seemed the cradle-song,
The deep soft breathing of the universe
Over its youngest child, the soul of man.
And, as I listened, that Æolian voice
Became an invocation and a prayer :
O you, that on your loftier mountain dwell
And move like light in light among the thoughts
Of heaven, translating our mortality
Into immortal song, is there not one

Among you that can turn to music now
This long dark fight for truth? Not one to touch
With beauty this long battle for the light,
This little victory of the spirit of man,
Doomed to defeat—for what was all we saw
To that which neither eyes nor soul could see?—
Doomed to defeat and yet unconquerable,
Climbing its nine miles nearer to the stars.
Wars we have sung. The blind, blood-boltered kings
Move with an epic music to their thrones.
Have you no song, then, of that nobler war?
Of those who strove for light, but could not dream
Even of this victory that they helped to win,
Silent discoverers, lonely pioneers,
Prisoners and exiles, martyrs of the truth
Who handed on the fire, from age to age;
Of those who, step by step, drove back the night
And struggled, year on year, for one more glimpse
Among the stars, of sovran law, their guide;
Of those who searching inward, saw the rocks
Dissolving into a new abyss, and saw
Those planetary systems far within,
Atoms, electrons, whirling on their way
To build and to unbuild our solid world;
Of those who conquered, inch by difficult inch,
The freedom of this realm of law for man;
Dreamers of dreams, the builders of our hope,
The healers and the binders up of wounds,
Who, while the dynasts drenched the world with blood,
Would in the still small circle of a lamp
Wrestle with death like Heracles of old
To save one stricken child?
Is there no song
To touch this moving universe of law
With ultimate light, the glimmer of that great dawn

Which over our ruined altars yet shall break
In purer splendour, and restore mankind
From darker dreams than even Lucretius knew,
To vision of that one Power which guides the world?
How should men find it? Only through those doors
Which, opening inward, in each separate soul
Give each man access to that Soul of all
Living within each life, not to be found
Or known, till, looking inward, each alone
Meets the unknowable and eternal God.

And there was one that moved like light in light
Before me there,—Love, human and divine,
That can exalt all weakness into power,—
Whispering, *Take this deathless torch of song . . .*
Whispering, but with such faith, that even I
Was humbled into thinking this might be
Through love, though all the wisdom of the world
Account it folly.
Let my breast be bared
To every shaft, then, so that Love be still
My one celestial guide the while I sing
Of those who caught the pure Promethean fire
One from another, each crying as he went down
To one that waited, crowned with youth and joy,—
Take thou the splendour, carry it out of sight
Into the great new age I must not know,
Into the great new realm I must not tread.

TABLETS OF CLAY

In old Cathay, in far Cathay,
Before the western world began,
They saw the moving fount of day
Eclipsed, as by a shadowy fan;
They stood upon their Chinese wall,
They saw his fire to ashes fade,
And felt the deeper slumber fall
On domes of pearl and towers of jade.

With slim brown hands, in Araby,
They traced, upon the desert sand,
Their Rams and Scorpions of the sky,
And strove—and failed—to understand.
Before their footprints were effaced
The shifting sand forgot their rune;
Their hieroglyphs were all erased,
Their desert naked to the moon.

In Bagdad of the purple nights,
Haroun Al Raschid built a tower,
Where sages watched a thousand lights
And read their legends, for an hour.
The tower is down, the Caliph dead,
Their astrolabes are wrecked with rust.
Orion glitters overhead,
Aladdin's lamp is in the dust.

In Babylon, in Babylon,
They baked their tablets of the clay;
And, year by year, inscribed thereon
The dark eclipses of their day;
They saw the moving finger write
Its Mene, Mene, on their sun,
A mightier shadow cloaks their light,
And clay is clay in Babylon.

I

COPERNICUS

THE neighbours gossiped idly at the door.
Copernicus lay dying overhead.
His little throng of friends, with startled eyes,
Whispered together, in that dark house of thought,
From which by one dim crevice in the wall
He used to watch the stars.
" His book has come
From Nuremberg at last ; but who would dare
To let him see it now ? "—
" They have altered it !
Though Rome approved in full, this preface, look,
Declares that his discoveries are a dream ! "—
" He has asked a thousand times if it has come ;
Could we tear out those pages ? "—
" He'd suspect."—
" What shall be done, then ? "—
" Hold it back awhile.
That was the priest's voice in the room above.
He may forget it. The last sacrament
May set his mind at rest, and bring him peace."—
Then, stealing quietly to that upper door,
They opened it a little, and saw within
The lean white deathbed of Copernicus
Who made our world a world without an end.
There, in that narrow room, they saw his face
Grey, seamed with thought, lit by a strange faint light ;
They saw those glorious eyes

Closing, that once had looked beyond the spheres
And seen our ancient firmaments dissolve
Into a boundless night.
Beside him knelt
Two women, like bowed shadows. At his head,
An old physician watched him. At his feet,
A cowled Franciscan knelt. Two altar-tapers
Gleamed on his crucifix.
The stillness prayed;
And the night air seemed fragrant with faint flowers,
The first breath of those far celestial fields. . . .

Then, like a dying soldier, that must leave
His last command to others, while the fight
Is yet uncertain, and the victory far,
Copernicus whispered, in a fevered dream,
" Yes, it is Death. But you must hold him back,
There, in the doorway, for a little while,
Until I know the work is rightly done.
Use all your weapons, doctor. I must live
To see and touch one copy of my book.
Have they not brought it yet?
They promised me
It should be here by nightfall.
One of you go
And hasten it. I can hold back Death till dawn.

Have they not brought it yet—from Nuremberg?
Do not deceive me. I must know it safe,
Printed and safe, for other men to use.
I could die then. My use would be fulfilled.
What has delayed them? Will not some one go
And tell them that my strength is running out?
Tell them that book would be an angel's hand
In mine, an easier pillow for my head,

A little lantern in the engulfing dark.
You see, I hid its struggling light so long
Under too small a bushel, and I fear
It may go out for ever. In the noon
Of life's brief day, I could not see the need
As now I see it, when the night shuts down.
I was afraid, perhaps, it might confuse
The lights that guide us for the souls of men.

But now I see three stages in our life.
At first, we bask contented in our sun
And take what daylight shows us for the truth.
Then we discover, in some midnight grief,
How all day long the sunlight blinded us
To depths beyond, where all our knowledge dies.
That's where men shrink, and lose their way in doubt.
Then, last, as death draws nearer, comes a night
In whose majestic shadow men see God,
Absolute Knowledge, reconciling all.
So, all my life I pondered on that scheme
Which makes this earth the centre of all worlds,
Lighted and wheeled around by sun and moon
And that great crystal sphere wherein men thought
Myriads of lesser stars were fixed like lamps,
Each in its place,—one mighty glittering wheel
Revolving round this dark abode of man.
Night after night, with even pace they moved,
Year after year, not altering by one point,
Their order, or their stations, those fixed stars
In that revolving firmament. The Plough
Still pointed to the Pole. Fixed in their sphere,
How else explain that vast unchanging wheel?
How, but by thinking all those lesser lights
Were huger suns, divided from our earth
By so immense a gulf that, if they moved

Ten thousand leagues an hour among themselves,
It would not seem one hair's-breadth to our eyes?
Utterly inconceivable, I know;
And yet we daily kneel to boundless Power
And build our hope on that Infinitude.

This did not daunt me, then. Indeed, I saw
Light upon chaos. Many discordant dreams
Began to move in lucid music now.
For what could be more baffling than the thought
That those enormous heavens must circle earth
Diurnally—a journey that would need
Swiftness to which the lightning-flash would seem
A white slug creeping on the walls of night;
While, if earth softly on her axle spun
One quiet revolution answered all.
It was our moving selves that made the sky
Seem to revolve. Have not all ages seen
A like illusion baffling half mankind
In life, thought, art? Men think, at every turn
Of their own souls, the very heavens have moved.

Light upon chaos, light, and yet more light;
For—as I watched the planets—Venus, Mars,
Appeared to wax and wane from month to month
As though they moved, now near, now far, from earth.
Earth could not be their centre. Was the sun
Their sovran lord then, as Pythagoras held?
Was this great earth, so stablished, so secure,
A planet also? Did it also move
Around the sun? If this were true, my friends,
No revolution in this world's affairs,
Not that blind maelstrom where imperial Rome
Went down into the dark, could so engulf
All that we thought we knew. We who believed

In our own majesty, we who walked with gods
As younger sons on this proud central stage,
Round which the whole bright firmament revolved
For our especial glory, must we creep
Like ants upon our midget ball of dust
Lost in immensity ?
I could not take
That darkness lightly. I withheld my book
For many a year, until I clearly saw,
And Rome approved me—have they not brought it yet ?—
That this tremendous music could not drown
The still supernal music of the soul,
Or quench the light that shone when Christ was born.
For who, if one lost star could lead the kings
To God's own Son, would shrink from following these
To His eternal throne ?
This at the least
We know, the soul of man can soar through heaven.
It is our own wild wings that dwarf the world
To nothingness beneath us. Let the soul
Take courage, then. If its own thought be true,
Not all the immensities of little minds
Can ever quench its own celestial fire.

No. This new night was needed, that the soul
Might conquer its own kingdom and arise
To its full stature. So, in face of death,
I saw that I must speak the truth I knew.

Have they not brought it ? What delays my book ?
I am afraid. Tell me the truth, my friends.
At this last hour, the Church may yet withhold
Her sanction. Not the Church, but those who think
A little darkness helps her.
Were this true,

They would do well. If the poor light we win
Confuse or blind us, to the Light of lights,
Let all our wisdom perish. I affirm
A greater Darkness, where the one true Church
Shall after all her agonies of loss
And many an age of doubt, perhaps, to come,
See this processional host of splendours burn
Like tapers round her altar.
So I speak
Not for myself, but for the age unborn.
I caught the fire from those who went before,
The bearers of the torch who could not see
The goal to which they strained. I caught their fire,
And carried it, only a little way beyond ;
But there are those that wait for it, I know,
Those who will carry it on to victory.
I dare not fail them. Looking back, I see
Those others,—fallen, with their arms outstretched
Dead, pointing to the future.
Far, far back,
Before the Egyptians built their pyramids
With those dark funnels pointing to the north,
Through which the Pharaohs from their desert tombs
Gaze all night long upon the Polar Star,
Some wandering Arab crept from death to life
Led by the Plough across those wastes of pearl." . . .

A shadow moved towards him from the door.
Copernicus, with a cry, upraised his head.
" The book, I cannot see it, let me feel
The lettering on the cover."
" It is here ! " . . .
A shadow quenched the tapers, and drew back
A window-curtain. The unchanging stars
Looked down upon the dying face. His words

Came gently as a sleeping child's—" a hand
To grasp, in mine, more closely. . . . There will be light,
More light—when men can look on it, and live—
In that pure realm whose darkness was our peace."

II

TYCHO BRAHE

I

THEY thought him a magician, Tycho Brahe,
Who lived on that strange island in the Sound,
Nine miles from Elsinore.
His legend reached
The Mermaid Inn the year that Shakespeare died.
Fynes Moryson had brought his travellers' tales
Of Wheen, the heart-shaped isle where Tycho made
His great discoveries, and, with Jeppe, his dwarf,
And flaxen-haired Christine, the peasant girl,
Dreamed his great dreams for five-and-twenty years.
For there he lit that lanthorn of the law,
Uraniborg; that fortress of the truth,
With Pegasus flying above its loftiest tower,
While, in its roofs, like wide enchanted eyes
Watching, the brightest windows in the world,
Opened upon the stars.

Nine miles from Elsinore, with all those ghosts,
There's magic enough in that! But white-cliffed Wheen,
Six miles in girth, with crowds of hunchback waves
Crawling all round it, and those moonstruck windows,
Held its own magic, too; for Tycho Brahe
By his mysterious alchemy of dreams
Had so enriched its soil, that when the king
Of England wished to buy it, Denmark asked
A price too great for any king on earth.
"Give us," they said, "in scarlet cardinal's cloth

Enough to cover it, and, at every corner,
Of every piece, a right rose-noble too ;
Then all that kings can buy of Wheen is yours.
Only," said they, " a merchant bought it once ;
And, when he came to claim it, goblins flocked
All round him, from its forty goblin farms,
And mocked him, bidding him take away the stones
That he had bought, for nothing else was his."
These things were fables. They were also true.

They thought him a magician, Tycho Brahe,
The astrologer, who wore the mask of gold.
Perhaps he was. There's magic in the truth ;
And only those who find and follow its laws
Can work its miracles.
Tycho sought the truth
From that strange year in boyhood when he heard
The great eclipse foretold ; and, on the day
Appointed, at the very minute even,
Beheld the weirdly punctual shadow creep
Across the sun, bewildering all the birds
With thoughts of evening.
Picture him, on that day,
The boy at Copenhagen, with his mane
Of thick red hair, thrusting his freckled face
Out of his upper window, holding the piece
Of glass he blackened above his candle-flame
To watch that orange ember in the sky
Wane into smouldering ash.
He whispered there,
" So it is true. By searching in the heavens,
Men can foretell the future."
In the street
Below him, throngs were babbling of the plague
That might or might not follow.

He resolved
To make himself the master of that deep art,
And know what might be known.
He bought the books
Of Stadius with his tables of the stars.
Night after night, among the gabled roofs,
Climbing and creeping through a world unknown
Save to the roosting stork, he learned to find
The constellations, Cassiopeia's throne,
The Plough still pointing to the Polar Star,
The sword-belt of Orion. There he watched
The movement of the planets, hour on hour,
And wondered at the mystery of it all.

All this he did in secret, for his birth
Was noble, and such wonderings were a sign
Of low estate, when Tycho Brahe was young;
And all his kinsmen hoped that Tycho Brahe
Would live, serene as they, among his dogs
And horses; or, if honour must be won,
Let the superfluous glory flow from fields
Where blood might still be shed; or from those courts
Where statesmen lie. But Tycho sought the truth.
So, when they sent him in his tutor's charge
To Leipzig, for such studies as they held
More worthy of his princely blood, he searched
The Almagest; and while his tutor slept,
Measured the delicate angles of the stars,
Out of his window, with his compasses,
His only instrument. Even with this rude aid
He found so many an ancient record wrong
That more and more he burned to find the truth.

One night at home, as Tycho searched the sky,
Out of his window, compasses in hand,

Fixing one point upon a planet, one
Upon some loftier star, a ripple of laughter
Startled him, from the garden walk below.
He lowered his compass, peered into the dark
And saw—Christine, the blue-eyed peasant girl,
With bare brown feet, standing among the flowers.

She held what seemed an apple in her hand ;
And, in a voice that Aprilled all his blood,
The low soft voice of earth, drawing him down
From those cold heights to that warm breast of Spring,
A natural voice that had not learned to use
The false tones of the world, simple and clear
As a bird's voice, out of the fragrant darkness called,
" I saw it falling from your window-ledge !
I thought it was an apple, till it rolled
Over my foot.
It's heavy. Shall I try
To throw it back to you ? "
Tycho saw a stain
Of purple across one small arched glistening foot.
" Your foot is bruised," he cried.
" O no," she laughed,
And plucked the stain off. " Only a petal, see."
She showed it to him.
" But this—I wonder now
If I can throw it."
Twice she tried and failed ;
Or Tycho failed to catch that slippery sphere.
He saw the supple body swaying below,
The ripe red lips that parted as she laughed,
And those deep eyes where all the stars were drowned.

At the third time he caught it ; and she vanished,
Waving her hand, a little floating moth,

Between the pine-trees, into the warm dark night.
He turned into his room, and quickly thrust
Under his pillow that forbidden fruit;
For the door opened, and the hot red face
Of Otto Brahe, his father, glowered at him.
"What's this? What's this?"
The furious-eyed old man
Limped to the bedside, pulled the mystery out,
And stared upon the strangest apple of Eve
That ever troubled Eden,—heavy as bronze,
And delicately enchased with silver stars,
The small celestial globe that Tycho bought
In Leipzig.
Then the storm burst on his head!
This moon-struck 'pothecary's-prentice work,
These cheap-jack calendar-maker's gipsy tricks
Would damn the mother of any Knutsdorp squire,
And crown his father like a stag of ten.
Quarrel on quarrel followed from that night,
Till Tycho sickened of his ancient name;
And, wandering through the woods about his home,
Found on a hill-top, ringed with fragrant pines,
A little open glade of whispering ferns.
Thither, at night, he stole to watch the stars;
And there he told the oldest tale on earth
To one that watched beside him, one whose eyes
Shone with true love, more beautiful than the stars,
A daughter of earth, the peasant-girl, Christine.

They met there, in the dusk, on his last night
At home, before he went to Wittenberg.
They stood knee-deep among the whispering ferns,
And said good-bye.
"I shall return," he said,
"And shame them for their folly, who would set

Their pride above the stars, Christine, and you.
At Wittenberg or Rostoch I shall find
More chances and more knowledge. All those worlds
Are still to conquer. We know nothing yet;
The books are crammed with fables. They foretell
Here an eclipse, and there a dawning moon,
But most of them were out a month or more
On Jupiter and Saturn.
There's one way,
And only one, to knowledge of the law
Whereby the stars are steered, and so to read
The future, even perhaps the destinies
Of men and nations,—only one sure way,
And that's to watch them, watch them, and record
The truth we know, and not the lies we dream.
Dear, while I watch them, though the hills and sea
Divide us, every night our eyes can meet
Among those constant glories. Every night
Your eyes and mine, upraised to that bright realm,
Can, in one moment, speak across the world.
I shall come back with knowledge and with power,
And you—will wait for me?"
She answered him
In silence, with the starlight of her eyes.

II

He watched the skies at Wittenberg. The plague
Drove him to Rostoch, and he watched them there;
But, even there, the plague of little minds
Beset him. At a wedding-feast he met
His noble countryman, Manderup, who asked,
With mocking courtesy, whether Tycho Brahe
Was ready yet to practise his black art
At country fairs. The guests, and Tycho, laughed;

Whereat the swaggering Junker blandly sneered,
" If fortune-telling fail, Christine will dance,
Thus—tambourine on hip," he struck a pose.
" Her pretty feet will pack that booth of yours."

They fought, at midnight, in a wood, with swords,
And not a spark of light but those that leapt
Blue from the clashing blades. Tycho had lost
His moon and stars awhile, almost his life ;
For, in one furious bout, his enemy's blade
Dashed like a scribble of lightning into the face
Of Tycho Brahe, and left him spluttering blood,
Groping through that dark wood with outstretched hands,
To fall in a death-black swoon.
They carried him back
To Rostoch ; and when Tycho saw at last
That mirrored patch of mutilated flesh,
Seared as by fire, between the frank blue eyes
And firm young mouth where, like a living flower
Upon a stricken tree, youth lingered still,
He'd but one thought, Christine would shrink from him
In fear, or worse, in pity. An end had come
Worse than old age, to all the glory of youth.
Urania would not let her lover stray
Into a mortal's arms. He must remain
Her own, for ever ; and for ever, alone.

Yet, as the days went by, to face the world,
He made himself a delicate mask of gold
And silver, shaped like those that minstrels wear
At carnival in Venice, or when love,
Disguising its disguise of mortal flesh,
Wooes as a nameless prince from far away.
And when this world's day, with its blaze and coil
Was ended, and the first white star awoke

In that pure realm where dreams may find their own,
His eyes and hers, meeting on Hesperus,
Renewed their troth.
He seemed to see Christine,
Ringed by the pine-trees on that distant hill,
A small white figure, lost in space and time,
Yet gazing at the sky, and conquering all,
Height, depth, and heaven itself, by the sheer power
Of love at one with everlasting laws,
A love that shared the constancy of heaven,
And spoke to him across, above, the world.

III

Not till he crossed the Danube did he find
Among the fountains and the storied eaves
Of Augsburg, one to share his task with him.
Paul Hainzel, of that city, greatly loved
To talk with Tycho of the strange new dreams
Copernicus had kindled. Did this earth
Move? Was the sun the centre of our scheme?
And Tycho told him, there is but one way
To know the truth, and that's to sweep aside
All the dark cobwebs of old sophistry,
And watch and learn that moving alphabet,
Each smallest silver character inscribed
Upon the skies themselves, noting them down,
Till on a day we find them taking shape
In phrases, with a meaning; and, at last,
The hard-won beauty of that celestial book
With all its epic harmonies unfold
Like some great poet's universal song.

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe.
"Hainzel," he said, "we have no magic wand,
But what the truth can give us. If we find

Even with a compass, through a bedroom window,
That half the glittering Almagest is wrong,
Think you, what noble conquests might be ours,
Had we but nobler instruments."
He showed,
Quivering with eagerness, his first rude plan
For that great quadrant,—not the wooden toy
Of old Scultetus, but a kingly weapon,
Huge as a Roman battering-ram, and fine
In its divisions as any goldsmith's work.
" It could be built," said Tycho, " but the cost
Would buy a dozen culverin for your wars."
Then Hainzel, fired by Tycho's burning brain,
Answered, " We'll make it. We've a war to wage
On Chaos, and his kingdoms of the night."
They chose the cunningest artists of the town,
Clock-makers, jewellers, carpenters, and smiths,
And, setting them all afire with Tycho's dream,
Within a month his dream was oak and brass.
Its beams were fourteen cubits, solid oak,
Banded with iron. Its arch was polished brass
Whereon five thousand exquisite divisions
Were marked to show the minutes of degrees.

So huge and heavy it was, a score of men
Could hardly drag and fix it to its place
In Hainzel's garden.
Many a shining night,
Tycho and Hainzel, out of that maze of flowers,
Charted the stars, discovering point by point,
How all the records erred, until the fame
Of this new master, hovering above the schools
Like a strange hawk, threatened the creeping dreams
Of all the Aristotelians, and began
To set their mouse-holes twittering " Tycho Brahe ! "

Then Tycho Brahe came home, to find Christine.
Up to that whispering glade of ferns he sped,
At the first wink of Hesperus.
He stood
In shadow, under the darkest pine, to hide
The little golden mask upon his face.
He wondered, will she shrink from me in fear
Or loathing? Will she even come at all?
And, as he wondered, like a light she moved
Before him.
"Is it you?"—
"Christine! Christine,"
He whispered, "It is I, the mountebank,
Playing a jest upon you. It's only a mask!
Do not be frightened. I am here behind it."

Her red lips parted, and between them shone
The little teeth like white pomegranate seeds.
He saw her frightened eyes.
Then, with a cry,
Her arms went round him, and her eyelids closed.
Lying against his heart, she set her lips
Against his lips, and claimed him for her own.

IV

One frosty night, as Tycho bent his way
Home to the dark old abbey, he upraised
His eyes, and saw a portent in the sky.
There, in its most familiar patch of blue,
Where Cassiopeia's five-fold glory burned,
An unknown brilliance quivered, a huge star
Unseen before, a strange new visitant
To heavens unchangeable, as the world believed,
Since the creation.

Could new stars be born?
Night after night he watched that miracle
Growing and changing colour as it grew;
White at the first, and large as Jupiter;
And, in the third month, yellow, and larger yet;
Red in the fifth month, like Aldebaran,
And larger even than Lyra. In the seventh,
Bluish like Saturn; whence it dulled and dwined
Little by little, till after eight months more
Into the dark abysmal blue of night,
Whence it arose, the wonder died away.
But, while it blazed above him, Tycho brought
Those delicate records of two hundred nights
To Copenhagen. There, in his golden mask,
At supper with Pratensis, who believed
Only what old books told him, Tycho met
Dancey, the French Ambassador, rainbow-gay
In satin hose and doublet, supple and thin,
Brown-eyed, and bearded with a soft black tuft
Neat as a blackbird's wing,—a spirit as keen
And swift as France on all the starry trails
Of thought.
He saw the deep and simple fire,
The mystery of all genius, in those eyes
Above the golden vizard.
Tycho raised
His wine-cup, brimming—they thought—with purple dreams;
And bade them drink to their triumphant Queen
Of all the Muses, to their Lady of Light
Urania, and the great new star.
They laughed,
Thinking the young astrologer's golden mask
Hid a sardonic jest.
"The skies are clear,"

Said Tycho Brahe, " and we have eyes to see.
Put out your candles. Open those windows there ! "
The colder darkness breathed upon their brows,
And Tycho pointed, into the deep blue night.

There, in their most immutable height of heaven,
In *ipso cælo*, in the ethereal realm,
Beyond all planets, red as Mars it burned,
The one impossible glory.
" But it's true ! "
Pratensis gasped ; then, clutching the first straw,
" Now I recall how Pliny the Elder said,
Hipparchus also saw a strange new star,
Not where the comets, not where the *Rosæ* bloom
And fade, but in that solid crystal sphere
Where nothing changes."
Tycho smiled, and showed
The record of his watchings.
" But the world
Must know all this," cried Dancey. " You must print it."
" Print it ? " said Tycho, turning that golden mask
On both his friends. " Could I, a noble, print
This trafficking with Urania in a book ?
They'd hound me out of Denmark ! This disgrace
Of work, with hands or brain, no matter why,
No matter how, in one who ought to dwell
Fixed to the solid upper sphere, my friends,
Would never be forgiven."
Dancey stared
In mute amazement, but that mask of gold
Outstared him, sphinx-like, and inscrutable.

Soon through all Europe, like the blinded moths,
Roused by a lantern in old palaces
Among the mouldering tapestries of thought,

Weird fables woke and fluttered to and fro,
And wild-eyed sages hunted them for truth.
The Italian, Frangipani, thought the star
The lost Electra, that had left her throne
Among the Pleiads, and plunged into the night
Like a veiled mourner, when Troy town was burned.
The German painter, Busch, of Erfurt, wrote,
" It was a comet, made of mortal sins ;
A poisonous mist, touched by the wrath of God
To fire ; from which there would descend on earth
All manner of evil—plagues and sudden death,
Frenchmen and famine."
Preachers thumped and raved.
Theodore Beza in Calvin's pulpit tore
His grim black gown, and vowed it was the Star
That led the Magi. It had now returned
To mark the world's end and the Judgment Day.
Then, in this hubbub, Dancey told the king
Of Denmark, " There is one who knows the truth—
Your subject Tycho Brahe, who, night by night,
Watched and recorded all that truth could see.
It would bring honour to all Denmark, sire,
If Tycho could forget his rank awhile,
And print these great discoveries in a book,
For all the world to read."
So Tycho Brahe
Received a letter in the king's own hand,
Urging him, " Truth is the one pure fountain-head
Of all nobility. Pray forget your rank."
His noble kinsmen echoed, " If you wish
To please His Majesty and ourselves, forget
Your rank."
" I will," said Tycho Brahe ;
" Your reasoning has convinced me. I will print
My book, *De Nova Stella.* And to prove

All you have said concerning temporal rank
And this eternal truth you love so well,
I marry, to-day,"—they foamed, but all their mouths
Were stopped and stuffed and sealed with their own words,—
" I marry to-day my own true love, Christine."

V

They thought him a magician, Tycho Brahe.
Perhaps he was. There's magic all around us
In rocks and trees, and in the minds of men,
Deep hidden springs of magic.
He that strikes
The rock aright, may find them where he will.

And Tycho tasted happiness in his hour.
There was a prince in Denmark in those days ;
And, when he heard how other kings desired
The secrets of this new astrology,
He said, " This man, in after years, will bring
Glory to Denmark, honour to her prince.
He is a Dane. Give him this isle of Wheen,
And let him make his great discoveries there.
Let him have gold to buy his instruments,
And build his house and his observatory.

So Tycho set this island where he lived
Whispering with wizardry ; and, in its heart,
He lighted that strange lanthorn of the law,
And built himself that wonder of the world,
Uraniborg, a fortress for the truth,
A city of the heavens.
Around it ran
A mighty rampart twenty-two feet high,

And twenty feet in thickness at the base.
Its angles pointed north, south, east and west,
With gates and turrets ; and, within this wall,
Were fruitful orchards, apple and cherry, and pear ;
And, sheltered in their midst from all but sun,
A garden, warm and busy with singing bees.
There, many an hour, his flaxen-haired Christine
Sang to her child, her first-born, Magdalen,
Or watched her playing, a flower among the flowers.
Dark in the centre of that zone of bliss
Arose the magic towers of Tycho Brahe.
Two of them had great windows in their roofs
Opening upon the sky where'er he willed,
And under these observatories he made
A library of many a golden book ;
Poets and sages of old Greece and Rome,
And many a mellow legend, many a dream
Of dawning truth in Egypt, or the dusk
Of Araby. Under all of these he made
A subterranean crypt for alchemy,
With sixteen furnaces ; and, under this,
He sank a well, so deep, that Jeppe declared
He had tapped the central fountains of the world,
And drew his magic from those cold clear springs.

This was the very well, said Jeppe, the dwarf,
Where Truth was hidden ; but, by Tycho Brahe
And his weird skill, the magic water flowed,
Through pipes, uphill, to all the house above :
The kitchen where his cooks could broil a trout
For sages or prepare a feast for kings ;
The garrets for the students in the roof ;
The guest-rooms, and the red room to the north,
The study and the blue room to the south ;
The small octagonal yellow room that held

The sunlight like a jewel all day long,
And Magdalen, with her happy dreams, at night;
Then, facing to the west, one long green room,
The ceiling painted like the bower of Eve
With flowers and leaves, the windows opening wide
Through which Christine and Tycho Brahe at dawn
Could see the white sails drifting on the Sound
Like petals from their orchard.
To the north,
He built a printing house for noble books,
Poems, and those deep legends of the sky,
Still to be born at his Uraniborg.
Beyond the rampart to the north arose
A workshop for his instruments. To the south
A low thatched farm-house rambled round a yard
Alive with clucking hens; and, further yet
To southward on another hill, he made
A great house for his larger instruments,
And called it Stiernberg, mountain of the stars.

And, on his towers and turrets, Tycho set
Statues with golden verses in the praise
Of famous men, the bearers of the torch,
From Ptolemy to the new Copernicus.
Then, in that storm-proof mountain of the stars,
He set in all their splendour of new-made brass
His armouries for the assault of heaven,—
Circles in azimuth, armillary spheres,
Revolving zodiacs with great brazen rings;
Quadrants of solid brass, ten cubits broad,
Brass parallactic rules, made to revolve
In azimuth; clocks with wheels; an astrolabe;
And that large globe strengthened by oaken beams
He made at Augsburg.
All his gold he spent;

But Denmark had a prince in those great days ;
And, in his brain, the dreams of Tycho Brahe
Kindled a thirst for glory. So he made
Tycho the Lord of sundry lands and rents,
And Keeper of the Chapel where the kings
Of Oldenburg were buried ; for he said,
' To whom could all these kings entrust their bones
More fitly than to him who read the stars,
And though a mortal, knew immortal laws ;
And paced, at night, the silent halls of heaven ? '

VI

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe.
There, on his island, for a score of years,
He watched the skies, recording star on star,
For future ages, and, by patient toil,
Perfected his great tables of the sun,
The moon, the planets.
There, too happy far
For any history, sons and daughters rose,
A little clan of love, around Christine ;
And Tycho thought, when I am dead, my sons
Will rule and work in my Uraniborg.
And yet a doubt would trouble him, for he knew
The children of Christine would still be held
Ignoble by the world.
Disciples came,
Young-eyed and swift, the bearers of the torch
From many a city to Uraniborg,
And Tycho Brahe received them like a king,
And bade them light their torches at his fire.
The King of Scotland came, with all his court,
And dwelt eight days in Tycho Brahe's domain,
Asking him many a riddle, deep and dark,

Whose answer, none the less, a king should know.
What boots it on this earth to be a king,
To rule a part of earth, and not to know
The worth of his own realm, whether he rule
As God's vice-gerent, and his realm be still
The centre of the centre of all worlds;
Or whether, as Copernicus proclaimed,
This earth itself be moving, a lost grain
Of dust among the innumerable stars?
For this would dwarf all glory but the soul,
In king or peasant, that can hail the truth,
Though truth should slay it."
So to Tycho Brahe,
The king became a subject for eight days.
But, in the crowded hall, when he had gone,
Jeppe raised his matted head, with a chuckle of glee,
Quiet as the gurgle of joy in a dark rock-pool,
When the first ripple and wash of the first spring-tide
Flows bubbling under the dry sun-blackened fringe
Of seaweed, setting it all afloat again,
In magical colours, like a merman's hair.
" Jeppe has a thought," the gay young students cried,
Thronging him round, for all believed that Jeppe
Was fey, and had strange visions of the truth.
" What is the thought, Jeppe?"
" I can think no thoughts,"
Croaked Jeppe. " But I have made myself a song."
" Silence," they cried, " for Jeppe the nightingale!
Sing, Jeppe!"
And, wagging his great head to and fro
Before the fire, with deep dark eyes, he crooned:

THE SONG OF JEPPE

" What!" said the king,
" Is earth a bird or bee?

Can this uncharted boundless realm of ours
Drone thro' the sky, with leagues of struggling sea,
Forests, and hills, and towns, and palace-towers ? "
" Ay," said the dwarf,
" I have watched from Stiernborg's crown
Her far dark rim uplift against the sky ;
But, while earth soars, men say the stars go down ;
And, while earth sails, men say the stars go by."

An elvish tale !
Ask Jeppe, the dwarf ! *He* knows.
That's why his eyes look fey ; for, chuckling deep,
Heels over head amongst the stars he goes,
As all men go ; but most are sound asleep.
King, saint, and sage,
Even those that count it true,
Act as this miracle touched them not at all.
They are borne, undizzied, thro' the rushing blue,
And build their empires on a sky-tossed ball.

Then said the king,
" If earth so lightly move,
What of my realm ? O, what shall now stand sure ? "
" Nought," said the dwarf, " in all this world, but love.
All else is dream-stuff and shall not endure.
'Tis nearer now !
Our universe hath no centre,
Our shadowy earth and fleeting heaven no stay,
But that deep inward realm which each can enter,
Even Jeppe, the dwarf, by his own secret way."

" Where ? " said the king,
" O, where ? I have not found it ! "
" Here," said the dwarf, and music echoed " here."
" This infinite circle hath no line to bound it ;

Therefore its deep strange centre is everywhere.
Let the earth soar thro' heaven, that centre abideth ;
Or plunge to the pit, His covenant still holds true.
In the heart of a dying bird, the Master hideth ;
In the soul of a king," said the dwarf, " and in *my* soul, too."

VII

Princes and courtiers came, a few to seek
A little knowledge, many more to gape
In wonder at Tycho's gold and silver mask ;
Or when they saw the beauty of his towers,
Envy and hate him for them.
Thus arose
The small grey cloud upon the distant sky,
That broke in storm at last.
" Beware," croaked Jeppe,
Lifting his shaggy head beside the fire,
When guests like these had gone, " Master, beware ! "
And Tycho of the frank blue eyes would laugh.

Even when he found Witichius playing him false,
His anger, like a momentary breeze,
Died on the dreaming deep ; for Tycho Brahe
Turned to a nobler riddle,—" Have you thought,"
He asked his young disciples, " how the sea
Is moved to that strange rhythm we call the tides ?
He that can answer this shall have his name
Honoured among the bearers of the torch
While Pegasus flies above Uraniborg.
I was delayed three hours or more to-day
By the neap-tide. The fishermen on the coast
Are never wrong. They time it by the moon.
Post hoc, perhaps, not *propter hoc ;* and yet
Through all the changes of the sky and sea
That old white clock of ours with the battered face

Does seem infallible.
There's a love-song too,
The sailors on the coast of Sweden sing,
I have often pondered it. Your courtly poets
Upbraid the inconstant moon. But these men know
The moon and sea are lovers, and they move
In a most constant measure. Hear the words
And tell me, if you can, what silver chains
Bind them together." Then, in a voice as low
And rhythmical as the sea, he spoke that song:

THE SHEPHERDESS OF THE SEA

Reproach not yet our sails' delay;
You cannot see the shoaling bay,
The banks of sand, the fretful bars,
That ebb left naked to the stars.
The sea's white shepherdess, the moon,
Shall lead us into harbour soon.

Dear, when you see her glory shine
Between your fragrant boughs of pine,
Know there is but one hour to wait
Before her hands unlock the gate,
And the full flood of singing foam
Follow her lovely footsteps home.

Then waves like flocks of silver sheep
Come rustling inland from the deep,
And into rambling valleys press
Behind their heavenly shepherdess.
You cannot see them? Lift your eyes
And see their mistress in the skies.

She rises with her silver bow.
I feel the tide begin to flow;

And every thought and hope and dream
Follow her call, and homeward stream.
Borne on the universal tide,
The wanderer hastens to his bride.
The sea's white shepherdess, the moon,
Shall lead him into harbour soon.

VIII

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe,
But not so great that he could read the heart
Or rule the hand of princes.
When his friend
King Frederick died, the young Prince Christian reigned
And, round him, fool and knave made common cause
Against the magic that could pour their gold
Into a gulf of stars. This Tycho Brahe
Had grown too proud. He held them in contempt,
So they believed; for, when he spoke, their thoughts
Crept at his feet like spaniels. Junkerdom
Felt it was foolish, for he towered above it,
And so it hated him. Did he not spend
Gold that a fool could spend as quickly as he?
Were there not great estates bestowed upon him
In wisdom's name, that from the dawn of time
Had been the natural right of Junkerdom?
And would he not bequeath them to his heirs,
The children of Christine, an unfree woman?
"And you, sire, even you," they told the king,
"He has made a laughing-stock. That horoscope
He read for you, the night when you were born,
Printed, and bound it in green velvet, too,—
Read it. The whole world laughs at it. He said
That Venus was the star that ruled your fate,
And Venus would destroy you. Tycho Brahe

Inspired your royal father with the fear
That kept your youth so long in leading-strings,
The fear that every pretty hedgerow flower
Would be your Circe. So he thought to avenge
Our mockery of this peasant-girl, Christine,
To whom, indeed, he plays the faithful swine,
Knowing full well his gold and silver nose
Would never win another."
Thus the sky
Darkened above Uraniborg, and those
Who dwelt within it, till one evil day,
One seeming happy day, when Tycho marked
The seven-hundredth star upon his chart,
Two pompous officers from Walchendorp,
The chancellor, knocked at Tycho's eastern gate.
" We are sent," they said, " to see and to report
What use you make of these estates of yours.
Your alchemy has turned more gold to lead
Than Denmark can approve. The uses now !
Show us the uses of this work of yours."
Then Tycho showed his tables of the stars,
Seven hundred stars, each noted in its place
With exquisite precision, the result
Of watching heaven for five-and-twenty years.

" And is this all ? " they said.
They thought to invent
Some ground for damning him. The truth alone
Would serve them, as it seemed. For these were men
Who could not understand.
" Not all, I hope,"
Said Tycho, " for I think, before I die,
I shall have marked a thousand."
" To what end ?
When shall we reap the fruits of all this toil ?

Show us its uses."
" In the time to come,"
Said Tycho Brahe, " perhaps a hundred years,
Perhaps a thousand, when our own poor names
Are quite forgotten, and our kingdoms dust,
On one sure certain day, the torch-bearers
Will, at some point of contact, see a light
Moving upon this chaos. Though our eyes
Be shut for ever in an iron sleep,
Their eyes shall see the kingdom of the law,
Our undiscovered cosmos. They shall see it,—
A new creation rising from the deep,
Beautiful, whole.
We are like men that hear
Disjointed notes of some supernal choir.
Year after year, we patiently record
All we can gather. In that far-off time,
A people that we have not known shall hear them,
Moving like music to a single end."

They could not understand: this life that sought
Only to bear the torch and hand it on;
And so they made report that all the dreams
Of Tycho Brahe were fruitless; perilous, too,
Since he avowed that any fruit they bore
Would fall, in distant years, to alien hands.

Little by little, Walchendorp withdrew
His rents from Tycho Brahe, accusing him
Of gross neglects. The Chapel at Roskilde
Was falling into ruin. Tycho Brahe
Was Keeper of the Bones of Oldenburg,
He must rebuild the Chapel. All the gifts
That Frederick gave to help him in his task,
Were turned to stumbling-blocks; till, one dark day,

He called his young disciples round him there,
And in that mellow library of dreams,
Lit by the dying sunset, poured his heart
And mind before them, bidding them farewell.
Through the wide-open windows as he spoke
They heard the sorrowful whisper of the sea
Ebbing and flowing around Uraniborg.
" An end has come," he said, " to all we planned.
Uraniborg has drained her treasury dry.
Your Alma Mater now must close her gates
On you, her guests ; on me ; and, worst of all,
On one most dear, who made this place my home.
For you are young, your homes are all to win,
And you would all have gone your separate ways
In a brief while ; and, though I think you love
Your college of the skies, it could not mean
All that it meant to those who called it ' home.'

You that have worked with me, for one brief year,
Will never quite forget Uraniborg.
This room, the sunset gilding all those books,
The star-charts, and that old celestial globe,
The long bright evenings by the winter fire,
The talk that opened heaven, the songs you sung,
Yes, even, I think, the tricks you played with Jeppe,
Will somehow, when yourselves are growing old,
Be hallowed into beauty, touched with tears,
For you will wish they might be yours again.

These have been mine for five-and-twenty years,
And more than these,—the work, the dreams I shared
With you, and others here. My heart will break
To leave them. But the appointed time has come
As it must come to all men.

You and I

Have watched too many constant stars to dream
That heaven or earth, the destinies of men
Or nations, are the sport of chance. An end
Comes to us all through blindness, age, or death.
If mine must come in exile, it shall find me
Bearing the torch as far as I can bear it,
Until I fall at the feet of the young runner,
Who takes it from me, and carries it out of sight,
Into the great new age I shall not know,
Into the great new realm I must not tread.
Come, then, swift-footed, let me see you stand
Waiting before me, crowned with youth and joy,
At the next turning. Take it from my hand,
For I am almost ready now to fall.

Something I have achieved, yes, though I say it,
I have not loitered on that fiery way.
And if I front the judgment of the wise
In centuries to come, with more of dread
Than my destroyers, it is because this work
Will be of use, remembered and appraised,
When all their hate is dead.
I say the work,
Not the blind rumour, the glory or fame of it.
These observations of seven hundred stars
Are little enough in sight of those great hosts
Which nightly wheel around us, though I hope,
Yes, I still hope, in some more generous land
To make my thousand up before I die.
Little enough, I know,—a midget's work !
The men that follow me, with more delicate art
May add their tens of thousands ; yet my sum
Will save them just that five-and-twenty years
Of patience, bring them sooner to their goal,
That kingdom of the law I shall not see.

We are on the verge of great discoveries.
I feel them as a dreamer feels the dawn
Before his eyes are opened. Many of you
Will see them. In that day you will recall
This, our last meeting at Uraniborg,
And how I told you that this work of ours
Would lead to victories for the coming age.
The victors may forget us. What of that?
Theirs be the palms, the shouting, and the praise.
Ours be the fathers' glory in the sons.
Ours the delight of giving, the deep joy
Of labouring, on the cliff's face, all night long,
Cutting them foot-holes in the solid rock,
Whereby they climb so gaily to the heights,
And gaze upon their new-discovered worlds.
You will not find me there. When you descend,
Look for me in the darkness at the foot
Of those high cliffs, under the drifted leaves.
That's where we hide at last, we pioneers,
For we are very proud, and must be sought
Before the world can find us, in our graves.
There have been compensations. I have seen
In darkness, more perhaps than eyes can see
When sunlight blinds them on the mountain-tops;
Guessed at a glory past our mortal range,
And only mine because the night was mine.

Of those three systems of the universe,
The Ptolemaic, held by all the schools,
May yet be proven false. We yet may find
This earth of ours is not the sovereign lord
Of all those wheeling spheres. Ourselves have marked
Movements among the planets that forbid
Acceptance of it wholly. Some of these
Are moving round the sun, if we can trust

Our years of watching. There are stranger dreams.
This radical, Copernicus, the priest,
Of whom I often talked with you, declares
All of these movements can be reconciled,
If—a hypothesis only—we should take
The sun itself for centre, and assume
That this huge earth, so stablished, so secure
In its foundations, is a planet also,
And moves around the sun.

I cannot think it.
This leap of thought is yet too great for me.
I have no doubt that Ptolemy was wrong.
Some of his planets move around the sun.
Copernicus is nearer to the truth
In some things. But the planets we have watched
Still wander from the course that he assigned.
Therefore, my system, which includes the best
Of both, I hold may yet be proven true.
This earth of ours, as Jeppe declared one day,
So simply that we laughed, is ' much too big
To move,' so let it be the centre still,
And let the planets move around their sun ;
But let the sun with all its planets move
Around our central earth.

This at the least
Accords with all we know, and saves mankind
From that enormous plunge into the night ;
Saves them from voyaging for ten thousand years
Through boundless darkness without sight of land ;
Saves them from all that agony of loss,
As one by one the beacon-fires of faith
Are drowned in blackness.

I beseech you, then,
Let me be proven wrong, before you take
That darkness lightly. If at last you find

The proven facts against me, take the plunge.
Launch out into that darkness. Let the lamps
Of heaven, the glowing hearth-fires that we knew
Die out behind you, while the freshening wind
Blows on your brows, and overhead you see
The stars of truth that lead you from your home.

I love this island,—every little glen,
Hazel-wood, brook, and fish-pond ; every bough
And blossom in that garden ; and I hoped
To die here. But it is not chance, I know,
That sends me wandering through the world again.
My use perhaps is ended ; and the power
That made me, breaks me."
As he spoke, they saw
The tears upon his face. He bowed his head
And left them silent in the darkened room.
They saw his face no more.
The self-same hour,
Tycho, Christine, and all their children, left
Their island-home for ever. In their ship
They took a few of the smaller instruments,
And that most precious record of the stars,
His legacy to the future. Into the night
They vanished, leaving on the ghostly cliffs
Only one dark, distorted, dog-like shape
To watch them, sobbing, under its matted hair,
" Master, have you forgotten Jeppe, your dwarf ? "

IX

He was a great magician, Tycho Brahe,
And yet his magic, under changing skies,
Could never change his heart, or touch the hills
Of those far countries with the tints of home.

And, after many a month of wandering,
He came to Prague ; and, though with open hands
Rodolphe received him, like an exiled king,
A new Æneas, exiled for the truth
(For so they called him), none could heal the wounds
That bled within, or lull his grief to sleep
With that familiar whisper of the waves,
Ebbing and flowing around Uraniborg.

Doggedly still he laboured ; point by point,
Crept on, with aching heart and burning brain,
Until his table of the stars had reached
The thousand that he hoped, to crown his toil.
But Christine heard him murmuring in the night,
" The work, the work ! Not to have lived in vain !
Into whose hands can I entrust it all ?
I thought to find him standing by the way,
Waiting to seize the splendour from my hand,
The swift, the young-eyed runner with the torch.
Let me not live in vain, let me not fall
Before I yield it to the appointed soul."
And yet the Power that made and broke him heard :
For, on a certain day, to Tycho came
Another exile, guided through the dark
Of Europe by the starlight in his eyes,
Or that invisible hand which guides the world.
He asked him, as the runner with the torch
Alone could ask, asked as a natural right
For Tycho's hard-won life-work, those results,
His tables of the stars. He gave his name
Almost as one who told him, *It is I ;*
And yet unconscious that he told ; a name
Not famous yet, though truth had marked him out
Already, by his exile, as her own,—
The name of Johann Kepler.

" It was strange,"
Wrote Kepler, not long after, " for I asked
Unheard-of things, and yet he gave them to me
As if I were his son. When first I saw him,
We seemed to have known each other years ago
In some forgotten world. I could not guess
That Tycho Brahe was dying. He was quick
Of temper, and we quarrelled now and then,
Only to find ourselves more closely bound
Than ever. I believe that Tycho died
Simply of heartache for his native land.
For though he always met me with a smile
Or jest upon his lips, he could not sleep
Or work, and often unawares I caught
Odd little whispered phrases on his lips
As if he talked to himself, in a kind of dream.
Yet I believe the clouds dispersed a little
Around his deathbed, and with that strange joy
Which comes in death, he saw the unchanging stars.
Christine was there. She held him in her arms.
I think, too, that he knew his work was safe.
An hour before he died, he smiled at me,
And whispered,—what he meant I hardly know—
Perhaps a broken echo from the past,
A fragment of some old familiar thought,
And yet I seemed to know. It haunts me still:
' *Come then, swift-footed, let me see you stand,*
Waiting before me, crowned with youth and joy;
This is the turning. Take it from my hand.
For I am ready, ready now, to fall.' "

III

KEPLER

JOHN KEPLER, from the chimney corner, watched
His wife Susannah, with her sleeves rolled back
Making a salad in a big blue bowl.
The thick tufts of his black rebellious hair
Brushed into sleek submission ; his trim beard
Snug as the soft round body of a thrush
Between the white wings of his fan-shaped ruff
(His best, with the fine lace border) spoke of guests
Expected ; and his quick grey humorous eyes,
His firm red whimsical pleasure-loving mouth,
And all those elvish twinklings of his face,
Were lit with eagerness. Only between his brows,
Perplexed beneath that subtle load of dreams,
Two delicate shadows brooded.
" What does it mean ?
Sir Henry Wotton's letter breathed a hint
That Italy is prohibiting my book,"
He muttered. " Then, if Austria damns it too,
Susannah mine, we may be forced to choose
Between the truth and exile. When he comes,
He'll tell me more. Ambassadors, I suppose,
Can only write in cipher, while our world
Is steered to heaven by murderers and thieves ;
But, if he'd wrapped his friendly warnings up
In a verse or two, I might have done more work
These last three days, eh, Sue ? "
" Look, John," said she,
" What beautiful hearts of lettuce ? Tell me now

How shall I mix it? Will your English guest
Turn up his nose at dandelion leaves
As crisp and young as these? They've just the tang
Of bitterness in their milk that gives a relish
And makes all sweet; and that's philosophy, John.
Now—these spring onions! Would his Excellency
Like sugared rose-leaves better?"

"He's a poet,
Not an ambassador only, so I think
He'll like a cottage salad."

"A poet, John!
I hate their arrogant little insect ways!
I'll put a toadstool in."

"Poets, dear heart,
Can be divided into two clear kinds,—
One that, by virtue of a half-grown brain,
Lives in a silly world of his own making,
A bubble, blown by himself, in which he flits
And dizzily bombinates, chanting 'I, I, I,'
For there is nothing in the heavens above
Or the earth, or hell beneath, but goes to swell
His personal pronoun. Bring him some dreadful news
His dearest friend is burned to death,—You'll see
The monstrous insect strike an attitude
And shape himself into one capital I,
A rubric, with red eyes. You'll see him use
The coffin for his pedestal, hear him mouth
His 'I, I, I,' instructing haggard grief
Concerning his odd ego. Does he chirp
Of love, it's 'I, I, I Narcissus, love,
Myself, Narcissus, imaged in those eyes.'
For all the love-notes that he sounds are made
After the fashion of passionate grasshoppers,
By grating one hind-leg across another.
Nor does he learn to sound that mellower 'You,'

Until his bubble bursts and leaves him drowned,
An insect in a soap-sud.
But there's another kind, whose mind still moves
In vital concord with the soul of things;
So that it thinks in music, and its thoughts
Pulse into natural song. A separate voice,
And yet caught up by the surrounding choirs,
There, in the harmonies of the Universe,
Losing himself, he saves his soul alive."
" John, I'm afraid ! "—
" Afraid of what, Susannah ? "—
" Afraid to put those Ducklings on to roast.
Your friend may miss his road; and, if he's late,
My little part of the music will be spoiled."—
" He won't, Susannah. Bad poets are always late.
Good poets, at times, delay a note or two;
But all the great are punctual as the sun.
What's that ? He's early ! That's his knock, I think ! "
" The Lord have mercy, John, there's nothing ready !
Take him into your study and talk to him,
Talk hard. He's come an hour before his time;
And I've to change my dress. I'll into the kitchen ! "

Then, in a moment, all the cottage rang
With greetings; hand grasped hand; his Excellency
Forgot the careful prologue he'd prepared,
And made an end of mystery. He had brought
A message from his wisdom-loving king
Who, hearing of new menaces to the light
In Europe, urged the illustrious Kepler now
To make his home in England. There, his thought
And speech would both be free.
" My friend," said Wotton,
" I have moved in those old strongholds of the night,
And heard strange mutterings. It is not many years

Since Bruno burned. There's trouble brewing too,
For one you know, I think,—the Florentine
Who made that curious optic tube."—
" You mean
The man at Padua, Galileo ? "—
" Yes."
" They will not dare or need. Proof or disproof
Rests with their eyes."—
" Kepler, have you not heard
Of those who, fifteen hundred years ago,
Had eyes and would not see ? Eyes quickly close
When souls prefer the dark."—
" So be it. Other and younger eyes will see.
Perhaps that's why God gave the young a spice
Of devilry. They'll go look, while elders gasp ;
And, when the Devil and Truth go hand in hand,
God help their enemies. You will send my thanks,
My grateful thanks, Sir Henry, to your king.
To-day I cannot answer you. I must think.
It would be very difficult. My wife
Would find it hard to leave her native land.
Say nothing yet before her."
Then, to hide
Their secret from Susannah, Kepler poured
His mind out, and the world's dead branches bloomed.
For, when he talked, another spring began
To which our May was winter ; and, in the boughs
Of his delicious thoughts, like feathered choirs,
Bits of old rhyme, scraps from the Sabine farm,
Celestial phrases from the Shepherd King,
And fluttering morsels from Catullus sang.
Much was fantastic. All was touched with light
That only genius knows to steal from heaven.
He spoke of poetry, as the " flowering time
Of knowledge," called it " thought in passionate tune

With those great rhythms that steer the moon and sun ;
Thought in such concord with the soul of things
That it can only move, like tides and stars,
And man's own beating heart, and the wings of birds,
In law, whose service only sets them free."
Therefore it often leaps to the truth we seek,
Clasping it, as a lover clasps his bride
In darkness, ere the sage can light his lamp.
And so, in music, men might find the road
To truth, at many a point, where sages grope.
One day, a greater Plato would arise
To write a new philosophy, he said,
Showing how music is the golden clue
To all the windings of this world's dark maze.
Himself had used it, partly proved it, too,
In his own book,—*The Harmonies of the World.*

" All that the years discover points one way
To this great ordered harmony," he said,
" Revealed on earth by music. Planets move
In subtle accord like notes of one great song
Audible only to the Artificer,
The Eternal Artist. There's no grief, no pain,
But music—follow it simply as a clue,
A microcosmic pattern of the whole—
Can show you, somewhere in its golden scheme,
The use of all such discords ; and, at last,
Their exquisite solution. Then darkness breaks
Into diviner light, love's agony climbs
Through death to life, and evil builds up heaven.
Have you not heard, in some great symphony,
Those golden mathematics making clear
The victory of the soul ? Have you not heard
The very heavens opening ?

Do those fools

Who thought me an infidel then, still smile at me
For trying to read the stars in terms of song,
Discern their orbits, measure their distances,
By musical proportions? Let them smile.
My folly at least revealed those three great laws;
Gave me the golden vases of the Egyptians,
To set in the great new temple of my God
Beyond the bounds of Egypt.
They will forget
My methods, doubtless, as the years go by,
And the world's wisdom shuts its music out.
The dust will gather on all my harmonies;
Or scholars turn my pages listlessly,
Glance at the musical phrases, and pass on,
Not troubling even to read one Latin page.
Yet they'll accept those great results as mine.
I call them mine. How can I help exulting,
Who climbed my ladder of music to the skies
And found, by accident, let them call it so,
Or by the inspiration of that Power
Which built His world of music, those three laws:—
First, how the speed of planets round the sun
Bears a proportion, beautifully precise
As music, to their silver distances;
Next, that although they seem to swerve aside
From those plain circles of old Copernicus,
Their paths were not less rhythmical and exact,
But followed always that most exquisite curve
In its most perfect form, the pure ellipse;
Third, that although their speed from point to point
Appeared to change, their radii always moved
Through equal fields of space in equal times.
Was this my infidelity, was this
Less full of beauty, less divine in truth,
Than their dull chaos? You, the poet, will know

How, as those dark perplexities grew clear,
And old anomalous discords changed to song,
My whole soul bowed and cried, *Almighty God,*
These are Thy thoughts, I am thinking after Thee!
I hope that Tycho knows. I owed so much
To Tycho Brahe; for it was he who built
The towers from which I hailed those three great laws.
How strange and far away it all seems now.
The thistles grow upon that little isle
Where Tycho's great Uraniborg once was.
Yet, for a few sad years, before it fell
Into decay and ruin, there was one
Who crept about its crumbling corridors,
And lit the fire of memory on its hearth."—
Wotton looked quickly up, "I think I have heard
Something of that. You mean poor Jeppe, his dwarf.
Fynes Moryson, at the Mermaid Inn one night
Showed a most curious manuscript, a scrawl
On yellow parchment, crusted here and there
With sea-salt, or the salt of those thick tears
Creatures like Jeppe, the crooked dwarf, could weep.
It had been found, clasped in a crooked hand,
Under the cliffs of Wheen, a crooked hand
That many a time had beckoned to passing ships,
Hoping to find some voyager who would take
A letter to its master.
The sailors laughed
And jeered at him, till Jeppe threw stones at them.
And now Jeppe, too, was dead, and one who knew
Fynes Moryson, had found him, and brought home
That curious crooked scrawl. Fynes Englished it
Out of its barbarous Danish. Thus it ran:
'Master, have you forgotten Jeppe, your dwarf,
Who used to lie beside the big log-fire
And feed from your own hand? The hall is dark,

There are no voices now,—only the wind
And the sea-gulls crying round Uraniborg.
I too am crying, Master, even I,
Because there is no fire upon the hearth,
No light in any window. It is night,
And all the faces that I knew are gone.

Master, I watched you leaving us. I saw
The white sails dwindling into sea-gull's wings,
Then melting into foam, and all was dark.
I lay among the wild flowers on the cliff
And dug my nails into the stiff white chalk
And called you, Tycho Brahe. You did not hear;
But gulls and jackdaws, wheeling round my head,
Mocked me with *Tycho Brahe*, and *Tycho Brahe!*

You were a great magician, Tycho Brahe;
And, now that they have driven you away,
I, that am only Jeppe,—the crooked dwarf,
You used to laugh at for his matted hair,
And head too big and heavy—take your pen
Here in your study. I will write it down
And send it by a sailor to the King
Of Scotland, and who knows, the mouse that gnawed
The lion free, may save you, Tycho Brahe.'"

"He is free now," said Kepler. "Had he lived,
He would have sent for Jeppe to join him there
At Prague. But death forestalled him, and your king.
The years in which he watched that planet Mars,
His patient notes and records, all were mine;
And, mark you, had he clipped or trimmed one fact
By even a hair's-breadth, so that his results
Made a pure circle of that planet's path,
It might have baffled us for an age and drowned

All our new light in darkness. But he held
To what he saw. He might so easily,
So comfortably have said, ' My instruments
Are crude and fallible. In so fine a point
Eyes may have erred, too. Why not acquiesce ?
Why mar the tune, why dislocate a world,
For one slight clash of seeming fact with faith ? '
But no, though stars might swerve, he held his course,
Recording only what his eyes could see
Until death closed them.
Then, to his results,
I added mine and saw, in one wild gleam,
Strange as the light of day to one born blind,
A subtler concord ruling them, and heard
Profounder tones of harmony resolve
Those broken melodies into song again."—
" Faintly and far away, I, too, have seen
In music, and in verse, that golden clue
Whereof you speak," said Wotton. " In all true song
There is a hidden logic. Even the rhyme
That, in bad poets, wrings the neck of thought,
Is like a subtle calculus to the true,
An instrument of discovery. It reveals
New harmonies, new analogies. It links
Far things and near, not in unnatural chains,
But in those true accords which still escape
The plodding reason, yet unify the world.
I caught some glimpses of this mystic power
In verses of your own, that elegy
On Tycho, and that great quatrain of yours—
I cannot quite recall the Latin words,
But made it roughly mine in words like these:

' I know that I am dust, and daily die ;
Yet, as I trace those rhythmic spheres at night,

I stand before the Thunderer's throne on high
And feast on nectar in the halls of light.'
My version lacks the glory of your lines
But . . ."
" Mine too was a version,"
Kepler laughed,
" Turned into Latin from old Ptolemy's Greek ;
For, even in verse, half of the joy, I think,
Is just to pass the torch from hand to hand
An undimmed splendour. But, last night, I tried
Some music all my own. I had a dream
That I was wandering in some distant world.
I have often dreamed it. Once it was the moon.
I wrote that down in prose. When I am dead,
It may be printed. This was a fairer dream ;
For I was walking in a far-off spring
Upon the planet, Venus. Only verse
Could spread true wings for that delicious world ;
And so I wrote it—for no eyes but mine,
Or 'twould be seized on, doubtless, as fresh proof
Of poor old Kepler's madness."—
" Let me hear,
Madman to madman ; for I, too, write verse."
Then Kepler, in a rhythmic murmur, breathed
His rich enchanted memories of that dream :

Beauty burned before me
Swinging a lanthorn through that fragrant night.
I followed a distant singing,
And a dreaming light.
How she led me, I cannot tell
To that strange world afar,
Nor how I walked, in that wild glen
Upon the sunset star.

Wingèd creatures floated
 Under those rose-red boughs of violet bloom,
With delicate forms unknown on Earth
 'Twixt irised plume and plume;
Human-hearted, angel-eyed,
 And crowned with unknown flowers;
For nothing in that enchanted world
 Followed the way of ours.

Only I saw that Beauty,
 On Hesper, as on earth, still held command;
And though, as one in slumber,
 I roamed that radiant land,
With all these earth-born senses sealed
 To what the Hesperians knew,
The faithful lanthorn of her law
 Was mine on Hesper too.

Then, half at home with wonder,
 I saw strange flocks of flowers like birds take flight;
Great trees that burned like opals
 To lure their loves at night;
Dark beings that could move in realms
 No dream of ours has known,
Till these became as common things
 As men account their own.

Yet, when that lanthorn led me
 Back to the world where once I thought me wise;
I saw, on this my planet,
 What souls, with awful eyes.
Hardly I dared to walk her fields
 As in that strange re-birth
I looked on those wild miracles
 The birds and flowers of earth.

Silence a moment held them, loth to break
The spell of that strange dream.
" One proof the more,"
Said Wotton at last, " that songs can mount and fly
To truth ; for this fantastic vision of yours
Of life in other spheres, awakes in me,
Either that slumbering knowledge of Socrates,
Or some strange premonition that the years
Will prove it true. This music leads us far
From all our creeds, except that faith in law.
Your quest for knowledge—how it rests on that !
How sure the soul is that if truth destroy
The temple, in three days the truth will build
A nobler temple ; and that order reigns
In all things. Even your atheist builds his doubt
On that strange faith ; destroys his heaven and God
In absolute faith that his own thought is true
To law, God's lanthorn to our stumbling feet ;
And so, despite himself, he worships God,
For where true souls are, there are God and heaven."—

" It is an ancient wisdom. Long ago,"
Said Kepler, " under the glittering Eastern sky,
The shepherd king looked up at those great stars,
Those ordered hosts, and cried *Cœli narrant*
Gloriam Dei !
Though there be some to-day
Who'd ape Lucretius, and believe themselves
Epicureans, little they know of him
Who, even in utter darkness, bowed his head,
To something nobler than the gods of Rome
Reigning beyond the darkness.
They accept
The law, the music of these ordered worlds ;
And straight deny the law's first postulate,

That out of nothingness nothing can be born,
Nor greater things from less. Can music rise
By chance from chaos, as they said that star
In Serpentarius rose? I told them, then,
That when I was a boy, with time to spare,
I played at anagrams. Out of my Latin name
Johannes Keplerus came that sinister phrase
Serpens in akuleo. Struck by this,
I tried again, but trusted it to chance.
I took some playing-cards, and wrote on each
One letter of my name. Then I began
To shuffle them; and, at every shuffle, I read
The letters, in their order, as they came,
To see what meaning chance might give to them.
Wotton, the gods and goddesses must have laughed
To see the weeks I lost in studying chance;
For had I scattered those cards into the black
Epicurean eternity, I'll swear
They'd still be playing at leap-frog in the dark,
And show no glimmer of sense. And yet—to hear
Those wittols talk, you'd think you'd but to mix
A bushel of good Greek letters in a sack
And shake them roundly for an age or so,
To pour the Odyssey out.
At last, I told
Those disputants what my wife had said. One night
When I was tired and all my mind a-dust
With pondering on their atoms, I was called
To supper, and she placed before me there
A most delicious salad. 'It would appear,'
I thought aloud, 'that if these pewter dishes,
Green hearts of lettuce, tarragon, slips of thyme,
Slices of hard-boiled egg, and grains of salt,
With drops of water, vinegar and oil,
Had in a bottomless gulf been flying about

From all eternity, one sure certain day
The sweet invisible hand of Happy Chance
Would serve them as a salad.'
' Likely enough,'
My wife replied, ' but not so good as mine,
Nor so well dressed.' "
They laughed. Susannah's voice
Broke in, " I've made a better one. The receipt
Came from the *Golden Lion*. I have dished
Ducklings and peas and all. Come, John, say grace."

IV

GALILEO

I

(*Celeste, in the Convent at Arcetri, writes to her old lover at Rome*)

My friend, my dearest friend, my own dear love,
I, who am dead to love, and see around me
The funeral tapers lighted, send this cry
Out of my heart to yours, before the end.
You told me once you would endure the rack
To save my heart one pang. Oh, save it now!
Last night there came a dreadful word from Rome
For my dear lord and father, summoning him
Before the inquisitors there, to take his trial
At threescore years and ten. There is a threat
Of torture, if his lips will not deny
The truth his eyes have seen.
You know my father,
You know me, too. You never will believe
That he and I are enemies of the faith.
Could I, who put away all earthly love,
Deny the Cross to which I nailed this flesh?
Could he, who, on the night when all those heavens
Opened above us, with their circling worlds,
Knelt with me, crushed beneath that weight of glory,
Forget the Maker of that glory now?
You'll not believe it. Neither would the Church,
Had not his enemies poisoned all the springs

And fountain-heads of truth. It is not Rome
That summons him, but Magini, Sizy, Scheiner,
Lorini, all the blind, pedantic crew
That envy him his fame, and hate his works
For dwarfing theirs.
Must such things always be
When truth is born?
Only five nights ago we walked together,
My father and I, here in the Convent garden;
And, as the dusk turned everything to dreams,
We dreamed together of his work well done
And happiness to be. We did not dream
That even then, muttering above his book,
His enemies, those enemies whom the truth
Stings into hate, were plotting to destroy him.
Yet something shadowed him. I recall his words—
"The grapes are ripening. See, Celeste, how black
And heavy. We shall have good wine this year."—
"Yes, all grows ripe," I said, "your life-work, too,
Dear father. Are you happy now to know
Your book is printed, and the new world born?"
He shook his head, a little sadly, I thought.
"Autumn's too full of endings. Fruits grow ripe
And fall, and then comes winter."
"Not for you!
Never," I said, "for those who write their names
In heaven. Think, father, through all ages now
No one can ever watch that starry sky
Without remembering you. Your fame . . ."
And there
He stopped me, laid his hand upon my arm,
And standing in the darkness with dead leaves
Drifting around him, and his bare grey head
Bowed in complete humility, his voice
Shaken and low, he said like one in prayer,

" Celeste, beware of that. Say truth, not fame.
If there be any happiness on earth,
It springs from truth alone, the truth we live
In act and thought. I have looked up there and seen
Too many worlds to talk of fame on earth.
Fame, on this grain of dust among the stars,
The trumpet of a gnat that thinks to halt
The great sun-clusters moving on their way
In silence ! Yes, that's fame. But truth, Celeste,
Truth and its laws are constant, even up there ;
That's where one man may face and fight the world.
His weakness turns to strength. He is made one
With universal forces, and he holds
The password to eternity.
Gate after gate swings back through all the heavens.
No sentry halts him, and no flaming sword.
Say truth, Celeste, not fame."
" No, for I'll say
A better word," I told him. " I'll say love."
He took my face between his hands and said—
His face all dark between me and the stars—
" What's love, Celeste, but this dear face of truth
Upturned to heaven."
He left me, and I heard,
Some twelve hours later, that this man whose soul
Was dedicate to truth, was threatened now
With torture, if his lips did not deny
The truth he loved.
I tell you all these things
Because to help him, you must understand him ;
And even you may doubt him, if you hear
Only those plausible outside witnesses
Who never heard his heart-beats as have I.
So let me tell you all—his quest for truth,
And how this hate began.

Even from the first,
He made his enemies of those almost-minds
Who chanced upon some new thing in the dark
And could not see its meaning, for he saw,
Always, the law illumining it within.
So when he heard of that strange optic-glass
Which brought the distance near, he thought it out
By reason, where that other hit upon it
Only by chance. He made his telescope;
And Oh, how vividly that day comes back,
When in their gorgeous robes the Senate stood
Beside him on that high Venetian tower,
Scanning the bare blue sea that showed no speck
Of sail. Then, one by one, he bade them look;
And one by one they gasped, "a miracle."
Brown sails and red, a fleet of fishing boats,
See how the bright foam bursts around their bows!
See how the bare-legged sailors walk the decks!
Then, quickly looking up, as if to catch
The vision, ere it tricked them, all they saw
Was empty sea again.
Many believed
That all was trickery, but he bade them note
The colours of the boats, and count their sails.
Then, in a little while, the naked eye
Saw on the sky-line certain specks that grew,
Took form and colour; and, within an hour,
Their magic fleet came foaming into port.
Whereat old senators, wagging their white beards,
And plucking at golden chains with stiff old claws
Too feeble for the sword-hilt, squeaked at once:
"This glass will give us great advantages
In time of war."
War, war, O God of love,
Even amidst their wonder at Thy world,

Dazed with new beauty, gifted with new powers,
These old men dreamed of blood. This was the thought
To which all else must pander, if he hoped
Even for one hour to see those dull eyes blaze
At his discoveries.
" Wolves," he called them, " wolves " ;
And yet he humoured them. He stooped to them,
Promised them more advantages, and talked
As elders do to children. You may call it
Weakness, and yet could any man do more,
Alone, against a world, with such a trust
To guard for future ages ? All his life
He has had some weanling truth to guard, has fought
Desperately to defend it, taking cover
Wherever he could, behind old fallen trees
Of superstition, or ruins of old thought.
He has read horoscopes to keep his work
Among the stars in favour with his prince.
I tell you this that you may understand
What seems inconstant in him. It may be
That he was wrong in these things, and must pay
A dreadful penalty. But you must explore
His mind's great ranges, plains and lonely peaks
Before you know him, as I know him now.
How could he talk to children, but in words
That children understand ? Have not some said
That God Himself has made His glory dark
For men to bear it. In his human sphere
My father has done this.
War was the dream
That filmed those old men's eyes. They did not hear
My father, when he hinted at his hope
Of opening up the heavens for mankind
With that new power of bringing far things near.
My heart burned as I heard him ; but they blinked

Like owls at noonday. Then I saw him turn,
Desperately, to humour them, from thoughts
Of heaven to thoughts of warfare.
Late that night
My own dear lord and father came to me
And whispered, with a glory in his face
As one who has looked on things too beautiful
To breathe aloud, " Come out, Celeste, and see
A miracle."
I followed him. He showed me,
Looking along his outstretched hand, a star,
A point of light above our olive-trees.
It was the star called Jupiter. And then
He bade me look again, but through his glass.
I feared to look at first, lest I should see
Some wonder never meant for mortal eyes.
He too had felt the same, not fear, but awe,
As if his hand were laid upon the veil
Between this world and heaven.
Then . . . I, too, saw,
Small as the smallest bead of mist that clings
To a spider's thread at dawn, the floating disk
Of what had been a star, a planet now,
And near it, with no disk that eyes could see,
Four needle-points of light, unseen before.
" The moons of Jupiter," he whispered low,
" I have watched them as they moved, from night to night;
A system like our own, although the world
Their fourfold lights and shadows make so strange
Must—as I think—be mightier than we dreamed,
A Titan planet. Earth begins to fade
And dwindle; yes, the heavens are opening now.
Perhaps up there, this night, some lonely soul
Gazes at earth, watches our dawning moon,
And wonders, as we wonder."

In that dark
We knelt together . . .
Very strange to see
The vanity and fickleness of princes.
Before his enemies had provoked the wrath
Of Rome against him, he had given the name
Of Medicean stars to those four moons
In honour of Prince Cosmo. This aroused
The court of France to seek a lasting place
Upon the map of heaven. A letter came
Beseeching him to find another star
Even more brilliant, and to call it *Henri*
After the reigning and most brilliant prince
Of France. They did not wish the family name
Of Bourbon. This would dissipate the glory.
No, they preferred his proper name of Henri.
We read it together in the garden here,
Weeping with laughter, never dreaming then
That this, this, this, could stir the little hearts
Of men to envy.
O, but afterwards,
The blindness of the men who thought themselves
His enemies. The men who never knew him,
The men that had set up a thing of straw
And called it by his name, and wished to burn
Their image and himself in one wild fire.
Men? Were they men or children? They refused
Even to look through Galileo's glass,
Lest seeing might persuade them. Even that sage,
That great Aristotelian, Julius Libri,
Holding his breath there, like a fractious child
Until his cheeks grew purple, and the veins
Were bursting on his brow, swore he would die
Sooner than look.
And that poor monstrous babe

Not long thereafter, kept his word and died,
Died of his own pent rage, as I have heard.
Whereat my lord and father shook his head
And, smiling, somewhat sadly—oh, you know
That smile of his, more deadly to the false
Than even his reasoning—murmured, " *Libri, dead,*
Who called the moons of Jupiter absurd!
He swore he would not look at them from earth.
I hope he saw them on his way to heaven."
Welser in Augsburg, Clavius at Rome,
Scoffed at the fabled moons of Jupiter.
It was a trick, they said. He had made a glass
To fool the world with false appearances.
Perhaps the lens was flawed. Perhaps his wits
Were wandering. Anything rather than the truth
Which might disturb the mighty in their seat.
" Let Galileo hold his own opinions.
I, Clavius, will hold mine."
He wrote to Kepler:
" You, Kepler, are the first, whose open mind
And lofty genius could accept for truth
The things which I have seen. With you for friend,
The abuse of the multitude will not trouble me.
Jupiter stands in heaven and will stand,
Though all the sycophants bark at him.
In Pisa,
Florence, Bologna, Venice, Padua,
Many have seen the moons. These witnesses
Are silent and uncertain. Do you wonder?
Most of them could not, even when they saw them,
Distinguish Mars from Jupiter. Shall we side
With Heraclitus or Democritus?
I think, my Kepler, we will only laugh
At this immeasurable stupidity.
Picture the leaders of our college here.

A thousand times I have offered them the proof
Of their own eyes. They sleep here, like gorged snakes,
Refusing even to look at planets, moons,
Or telescope. They think philosophy
Is all in books, and that the truth is found
Neither in nature, nor the Universe,
But in comparing texts. How you would laugh
Had you but heard our first philosopher
Before the Grand Duke, trying to tear down
And argue the new planets out of heaven,
Now by his own weird logic and closed eyes
And now by magic spells."
How could he help
Despising them a little? It's an error
Even for a giant to despise a midge;
For, when the giant reels beneath some stroke
Of fate, the buzzing clouds will swoop upon him,
Cluster and feed upon his bleeding wounds,
And do what midges can to sting him blind.
These human midges have not missed their chance.
They have missed no smallest spot upon that sun.
My mother was not married—they have found—
To my dear father. All his children, then,
And doubtless all their thoughts are evil, too;
But who that judged him ever sought to know
Whether, as evil sometimes wears the cloak
Of virtue, nobler virtue in this man
Might wear that outward semblance of a sin?
Yes, even you who love me, may believe
These thoughts are born of my own tainted heart;
And yet I write them, kneeling in my cell
And whisper them to One who blesses me
Here, from His Cross, upon the bare grey wall.
So, if you love me, bless me also, you,
By helping him. Make plain to all you meet,

What part his enemies have played in this.
How someone, somehow, altered the command
Laid on him all those years ago, by Rome,
So that it reads to-day as if he vowed
Never to think or breathe that this round earth
Moves with its sister-planets round the sun.
'Tis true he promised not to write or speak
As if this truth were stablished equally
With God's eternal laws ; and so he wrote
His Dialogues, reasoning for it, and against,
And gave the last word to Simplicius,
Saying that human reason must bow down
Before the power of God.
And even this
His enemies have twisted to a sneer
Against the Pope, and cunningly declared
Simplicius to be Urban.
Why, my friend,
There were three dolphins on the title-page,
Each with the tail of another in its mouth.
The censor had not seen this, and they swore
It held some hidden meaning. Then they found
The same three dolphins sprawled on all the books
Landini printed at his Florence press.
They tried another charge.
I am not afraid
Of any truth that they can bring against him ;
But, O, my friend, I more than fear their lies.
I do not fear the justice of our God ;
But I do fear the vanity of men ;
Even of Urban ; not His Holiness,
But Urban, the weak man, who may resent,
And in resentment rush half-way to meet
This cunning lie with credence. Vanity !
Oh, half the wrongs on earth arise from that !

Greed, and war's pomp, all envy, and most hate,
Are born of that; while one dear humble heart,
Beating with love for man, between two thieves,
Proves more than all His wounds and miracles
Our Crucified to be the Son of God.
Say that I long to see him; that my prayers
Knock at the gates of mercy, night and day.
Urge him to leave the judgment now with God
And strive no more.
If he be right, the stars
Fight for him in their courses. Let him bow
His poor, dishonoured, glorious, old grey head
Before this storm, and then come home to me.
Oh, quickly, or I fear 'twill be too late;
For I am dying. Do not tell him this;
But I must live to hold his hands again,
And know that he is safe.
I dare not leave him, helpless and half blind,
Half father and half child, to rack and cord.
By all the Christ within you, save him, you;
And, though you may have ceased to love me now,
One faithful shadow in your own last hour
Shall watch beside you till all shadows die,
And heaven unfold to bless you where I failed.

II

(*Scheiner writes to Castelli, after the Trial*)

What think you of your Galileo now,
Your hero that like Ajax should defy
The lightning? Yesterday I saw him stand
Trembling before our court of Cardinals,
Trembling before the colour of their robes
As sheep, before the slaughter, at the sight

And smell of blood. His lips could hardly speak,
And—mark you—neither rack nor cord had touched him:
Out of the Inquisition's five degrees
Of rigor: first, the public threat of torture;
Second, the repetition of the threat
Within the torture-chamber, where we show
The instruments of torture to the accused;
Third, the undressing and the binding; fourth,
Laying him on the rack; then, fifth and last,
Torture, *territio realis;* out of these,
Your Galileo reached the second only,
When, clapping both his hands against his sides,
He whined about a rupture that forbade
These extreme courses. Great heroic soul
Dropped like a cur into a sea of terror,
He sank right under. Then he came up gasping,
Ready to swear, deny, abjure, recant,
Anything, everything! Foolish, weak, old man,
Who had been so proud of his discoveries,
And dared to teach his betters. How we grinned
To see him kneeling there and whispering, thus,
Through his white lips, bending his old grey head:
"*I, Galileo Galilei, born*
A Florentine, now seventy years of age,
Kneeling before you, having before mine eyes,
And touching with my hands the Holy Gospels,
Swear that I always have believed, do now,
And always will believe what Holy Church
Has held and preached and taught me to believe;
And now, whereas I rightly am accused,
Of heresy, having falsely held the sun
To be the centre of our Universe,
And also that this earth is not the centre,
But moves;

I most illogically desire
Completely to expunge this dark suspicion,
So reasonably conceived. I now abjure,
Detest and curse these errors; and I swear
That should I know another, friend or foe,
Holding the selfsame heresy as myself,
I will denounce him to the Inquisitor
In whatsoever place I chance to be.
So help me God, and these His holy Gospels,
Which with my hands I touch."
You will observe
His promise to denounce. Beware, Castelli!
What think you of your Galileo now?

III

(*Castelli writes, enclosing Scheiner's letter to Campanella*)

What think I? This,—that he has laid his hands
Like Samson on the pillars of our world,
And one more trembling utterance such as this
Will overwhelm us all.
Oh, Campanella,
You know that I am loyal to our faith,
As Galileo too has always been.
You know that I believe, as he believes,
In the one Catholic Apostolic Church;
Yet there are many times when I could wish
That some blind Samson would indeed tear down
All this proud temporal fabric, made with hands,
And that, once more, we suffered with our Lord,
Were persecuted, crucified with Him.
I tell you, Campanella, on that day

When Galileo faced our Cardinals,
A veil was rent for me. There, in one flash,
I saw the eternal tragedy, transformed
Into new terms. I saw the Christ once more,
Before the court of Pilate. Peter there
Denied Him once again; and, as for me,
Never has all my soul so humbly knelt
To God in Christ, as when that sad old man
Bowed his grey head, and knelt—at seventy years-
To acquiesce, and shake the world with shame.
He shall not strive or cry! Strange, is it not,
How nearly Scheiner—even amidst his hate—
Quoted the Prophets? Do we think this world
So greatly bettered, that the ancient cry,
"*Despised, rejected*, hails our God no more?"

IV

(*Celeste writes to her father in his imprisonment at Siena*)

Dear father, it will seem a thousand years
Until I see you home again and well.
I would not have you doubt that all this time
I have prayed for you continually. I saw
A copy of your sentence. I was grieved;
And yet it gladdened me, for I found a way
To be of use, by taking on myself
Your penance. Therefore, if you fail in this,
If you forget it—and indeed, to save you
The trouble of remembering it—your child
Will do it for you.
Ah, could she do more
How willingly would your Celeste endure

A straiter prison than she lives in now
To set you free.
" A prison," I have said ;
And yet, if you were here, 'twould not be so.
When you were pent in Rome, I used to say,
" Would he were at Siena ! " God fulfilled
That wish. You are at Siena ; and I now say
Would he were at Arcetri.
So perhaps
Little by little, angels can be wooed
Each day, by some new prayer of mine or yours,
To bring you wholly back to me, and save
Some few of the flying days that yet remain.
You see, these other Nuns have each their friend,
Their patron Saint, their ever near *devoto*,
To whom they tell their joys and griefs ; but I
Have only you, dear father, and if you
Were only near me, I could want no more.
Your garden looks as if it missed your love.
The unpruned branches lean against the wall
To look for you. The walks run wild with flowers.
Even your watch-tower seems to wait for you ;
And, though the fruit is not so good this year
(The vines were hurt by hail, I think, and thieves
Have climbed the wall too often for the pears),
The crop of peas is good, and only waits
Your hand to gather it.
In the dovecote, too,
You'll find some plump young pigeons. We must make
A feast for your return.
In my small plot.
Here at the Convent, better watched than yours,
I raised a little harvest. With the price
I got for it, I had three Masses said
For my dear father's sake.

V

(Galileo writes to his friend Castelli, after his return to Arcetri)

Castelli, O Castelli, she is dead.
I found her driving death back with her soul
Till I should come.
I could not even see
Her face.—These useless eyes had spent their power
On distant worlds, and lost that last faint look
Of love on earth.
I am in the dark, Castelli,
Utterly and irreparably blind.
The Universe which once these outworn eyes
Enlarged so far beyond its ancient bounds
Is henceforth shrunk into that narrow space
Which I myself inhabit.
Yet I found
Even in the dark, her tears against my face,
Her thin soft childish arms around my neck,
And her voice whispering . . . love, undying love;
Asking me, at this last, to tell her true,
If we should meet again.
Her trust in me
Had shaken her faith in what my judges held;
And, as I felt her fingers clutch my hand,
Like a child drowning. "Tell me the truth," she said,
"Before I lose the light of your dear face"—
It seemed so strange that dying she could see me
While I had lost her,—"tell me, before I go."
"Believe in Love," was all my soul could breathe.
I heard no answer. Only I felt her hand
Clasp mine and hold it tighter. Then she died,
And left me to my darkness. Could I guess

At unseen glories, in this deeper night,
Make new discoveries of profounder realms,
Within the soul? O, could I find Him there,
Rise to Him through His harmonies of law
And make His will my own!
This much, at least,
I know already, that—in some strange way—
His law implies His love; for, failing that,
All grows discordant, and the primal Power
Ignobler than His children.
So I trust
One day to find her, waiting for me still,
When all things are made new.
I raise this torch
Of knowledge. It is one with my right hand,
And the dark sap that keeps it burning flows
Out of my heart; and yet, for all my faith,
It shows me only darkness.
Was I wrong?
Did I forget the subtler truth of Rome
And, in my pride, obscure the world's one light?
Did I subordinate to this moving earth
Our swiftlier-moving God?
O, my Celeste,
Once, once at least, you knew far more than I;
And she is dead, Castelli, she is dead.

VI

(*Viviani, many years later, writes to a friend in England*)

I was his last disciple, as you say
I went to him, at seventeen years of age,

And offered him my hands and eyes to use,
When, voicing the true mind and heart of Rome,
Father Castelli, his most faithful friend,
Wrote, for my master, that compassionate plea;
The noblest eye that Nature ever made
Is darkened; one so exquisitely dowered,
So delicate in power that it beheld
More than all other eyes in ages gone
And opened the eyes of all that are to come.
But, out of England, even then, there shone
The first ethereal promise of the light
That crowns my master dead. Well I recall
That day of days. There was no faintest breath
Among his garden cypress-trees. They dreamed
Dark, on a sky too beautiful for tears,
And the first star was trembling overhead,
When, quietly as a messenger from heaven,
Moving unseen, through his own purer realm,
Among the shadows of our mortal world,
A young man, with a strange light on his face
Knocked at the door of Galileo's house.
His name was Milton.
By the hand of God,
He, the one living soul on earth with power
To read the starry soul of this blind man,
Was led through Italy to his prison door.
He looked on Galileo, touched his hand . . .
O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark. . . .
In after days,
He wrote it; but it pulsed within him then;
And Galileo rising to his feet
And turning on him those unseeing eyes
That had searched heaven and seen so many worlds,
Said to him, "You have found me."

Often he told me in those last sad months
Of how your grave young island poet brought
Peace to him, with the knowledge that, far off,
In other lands, the truth he had proclaimed
Was gathering power.
Soon after, death unlocked
His prison, and the city that he loved,
Florence, his town of flowers, whose gates in life
He was forbid to pass, received him dead.

You write to me from England, that his name
Is now among the mightiest in the world,
And in his name I thank you.
I am old;
And I was very young when, long ago,
I stood beside his poor dishonoured grave
Where hate denied him even an epitaph;
And I have seen, slowly and silently,
His purer fame arising, like a moon
In marble on the twilight of those aisles
At Santa Croce, where the dread decree
Was read against him.
Now, against two wrongs,
Let me defend two victims: first, the Church
Whom many have vilified for my master's doom;
And second, Galileo, whom they reproach
Because they think that in his blind old age
He might with one great eagle's glance have cowed
His judges, played the hero, raised his hands
Above his head, and posturing like a mummer
Cried (as one empty rumour now declares)
After his recantation—*yet, it moves!*
Out of this wild confusion, fourfold wrongs
Are heaped on both sides.—I would fain bring peace,
The peace of truth to both before I die;

And, as I hope, rest at my master's feet.
It was not Rome that tried to murder truth;
But the blind hate and vanity of man.
Had Galileo but concealed the smile
With which, like Socrates, he answered fools,
They would not, in the name of Christ, have mixed
This hemlock in His chalice.
O pitiful,
Pitiful human hearts that must deny
Their own unfolding heavens, for one light word
Twisted by whispering malice.
Did he mean
Simplicio, in his dialogues, for the Pope?
Doubtful enough—the name was borrowed straight
From older dialogues.
If he gave one thought
Of Urban's to Simplicio—you know well
How composite are all characters in books,
How authors find their colours here and there,
And paint both saints and villains from themselves.
No matter. This was Urban. Make it clear.
Simplicio means a simpleton. The saints
Are roused by ridicule to most human wrath.
Urban was once his friend. This hint of ours
Kills all of that. And so we mortals close
The doors of Love and Knowledge on the world.
And so, for many an age, the name of Christ
Has been misused by man to mask man's hate.
How should the Church escape, then? I who loved
My master, know he had no truer friend
Than many of those true servants of the Church,
Fathers and priests who, in their lowlier sphere,
Moved nearer than her cardinals to the Christ.
These were the very Rome, and held her keys.
Those who charge Rome with hatred of the light

Would charge the sun with darkness, and accuse
This dome of sky for all the blood-red wrongs
That men commit beneath it. Art and song
That found her once in Europe their sole shrine
And sanctuary absolve her from that stain.

But there's this other charge against my friend,
And master, Galileo. It is brought
By friends, made sharper by their pity and grief,
The charge that he refused his martyrdom
And so denied his own high faith.
Whose faith,—
His friends', his Protestant followers', or his own?
Faced by the torture, that sublime old man
Was still a faithful Catholic, and his thought
Plunged deeper than his Protestant followers knew.
His aim was not to strike a blow at Rome
But to confound his enemies. He believed
As humbly as Castelli or Celeste
That there is nothing absolute but that Power
With which his Church confronted him. To this
He bowed his head, acknowledging that his light
Was darkness; but affirming, all the more,
That Ptolemy's light was even darker yet.
Read your own Protestant Milton, who derived
His mighty argument from my master's lips:
" *Whether the sun predominant in heaven*
Rise on the earth, or earth rise on the sun;
Leave them to God above; Him serve and fear."
Just as in boyhood, when my master watched
The swinging lamp in the cathedral there
At Pisa; and, by one finger on his pulse,
Found that, although the great bronze miracle swung
Through ever-shortening spaces, yet it moved
More slowly, and so still swung in equal times;

He straight devised another boon to man,
Those pulse-clocks which by many a fevered bed
Our doctors use ; dreamed of that timepiece, too,
Whose punctual swinging pendulum on earth
Measures the starry periods, and to-day
Talks peacefully to children by the fire
Like an old grandad full of ancient tales,
Remembering endless ages, and foretelling
Eternities to come ; but, all the while
There, in the dim cathedral, he knew well,
That dreaming youngster, with his tawny mane
Of red-gold hair, and deep ethereal eyes,
What odorous clouds of incense round him rose ;
Was conscious in the dimness, of great throngs
Kneeling around him ; shared in his own heart
The music and the silence and the cry,
O salutaris hostia !—so now,
There was no mortal conflict in his mind
Between his dream-clocks and things absolute,
And one far voice, most absolute of all,
Feeble with suffering, calling night and day
" *Return, return,*" the voice of his Celeste.
All these things co-existed, and the less
Were comprehended, like the swinging lamp,
Within that great cathedral of his soul.
Often he bade me, in that desolate house,
Il Giojello, of old a jewel of light,
Read to him one sad letter, till he knew
The most of it by heart, and while he walked
His garden, leaning on my arm, at times
I think he quite forgot that I was there ;
For he would quietly murmur it to himself,
As if she had sent it, half an hour ago :
" Now, with this little Winter's gift of fruit
I send you, father, from our southward wall,

Our convent's rarest flower, a Christmas rose.
At this cold season, it should please you much,
Seeing how rare it is ; but, with the rose,
You must accept its thorns, which bring to mind
Our Lord's own bitter Passion. Its green leaves
Image the hope that through His Passion we,
After this winter of our mortal life,
May find the beauty of an eternal spring
In heaven."
Praise me the martyr, out of whose agonies
Some great new hope is born, but not the fool
Who starves his heart to prove what eyes can see
And intellect confirm throughout the world.
Why must he follow the idiot schoolboy code,
Torture her soul to reinforce the sight
Of those that closed their eyes and would not see.
To your own men of science, fifty turns
Of the thumbscrew would not prove that earth revolved.
Call it Italian subtlety if you will,
I say his intricate cause could not be won
By blind heroics. Much that his enemies challenged
Was not yet wholly proven, though his mind
Had leapt to a certainty. He must leave the rest
To those that should come after, swift and young,—
Those runners with the torch for whom he longed
As his deliverers. Had he chosen death
Before his hour, his proofs had been obscured
For many a year. His respite gave him time
To push new pawns out, in the blindfold play
Of those last months, and checkmate, not the Church
But those that hid behind her. He believed
His truth was all harmonious with her own.
How could he choose between them ? Must he die
To affirm a discord that himself denied ?
On many a point, he was less sure than we :

But surer far of much that we forget.
The movements that he saw he could but judge
By some fixed point in space. He chose the sun.
Could this be absolute? Could he then be sure
That this great sun did not with all its worlds
Move round a deeper centre? What became
Of your Copernicus then? Could he be sure
Of any unchanging centre, whence to judge
This myriad-marching universe, but one—
The absolute throne of God.
Affirming this
Eternal Rock, his own uncertainties
Became more certain, and although his lips
Breathed not a syllable of it, though he stood
Silent as earth that also seemed so still,
The very silence thundered, *yet it moves!*
He held to what he knew, secured his work
Through feeble hands like mine, in other lands,
Not least in England, as I think you know.
For, partly through your poet, as I believe,
When his great music rolled upon your skies,
New thoughts were kindled in the general mind.
'Twas at Arcetri that your Milton gained
The first great glimpse of his celestial realm.
Picture him,—still a prisoner of our light,
Closing his glorious eyes—that in the dark,
He might behold this wheeling universe,—
The planets gilding their ethereal horns
With sun-fire. Many a pure immortal phrase
In his own work, as I have pondered it,
Lived first upon the lips of him whose eyes
Were darkened first,—in whom, too, Milton found
That Samson Agonistes, not himself
As many have thought, but my dear master dead.
These are a part of England's memories now,

The music blown upon her sea-bright air
When, in the year of Galileo's death,
Newton, the mightiest of the sons of light,
Was born to lift the splendour of this torch
And carry it, as I heard that Tycho said
Long since to Kepler, " Carry it out of sight,
Into the great new age I must not know,
Into the great new realm I must not tread."

V

NEWTON

I

" If I saw farther, 'twas because I stood
On giant shoulders," wrote the king of thought,
Too proud of his great line to slight the toils
Of his forebears. He turned to their dim past,
Their fading victories and their fond defeats,
And knelt as at an altar, drawing all
Their strengths into his own ; and so went forth
With all their glory shining in his face,
To win new victories for the age to come.
So, where Copernicus had destroyed the dream
We called our world ; where Galileo watched
Those ancient firmaments melt, a thin blue smoke
Into a vaster night ; where Kepler heard
Only stray fragments, isolated chords
Of that tremendous music which should bind
All things anew in one, Newton arose
And carried on their fire.
Around him reeled
Through lingering fumes of hate and clouds of doubt,
Lit by the afterglow of the Civil War,
The dissolute throngs of that Walpurgis night
Where all the cynical spirits that deny
Danced with the vicious lusts that drown the soul
In flesh too gross for Circe or her swine.
But, in his heart, he heard one instant voice.

" *On with the torch once more, make all things new,*
Build the new heaven and earth, and save the world."

Ah, but the infinite patience, the long months
Lavished on tasks that, to the common eye,
Were insignificant, never to be crowned
With great results, or even with earth's rewards.
Could Rembrandt but have painted him, in those hours
Making his first analysis of light
Alone, there, in his darkened Cambridge room
At Trinity ! Could he have painted, too,
The secret glow, the mystery, and the power,
The sense of all the thoughts and unseen spires
That soared to heaven around him !
He stood there,
Obscure, unknown, the shadow of a man
In darkness, like a grey dishevelled ghost,
—Bare-throated, down at heel, his last night's supper
Littering his desk, untouched ; his glimmering face,
Under his tangled hair, intent and still,—
Preparing our new universe.
He caught
The sunbeam striking through that bullet-hole
In his closed shutter—a round white spot of light
Upon a small dark screen.
He interposed
A prism of glass. He saw the sunbeam break
And spread upon the screen its rainbow band
Of disentangled colours, all in scale
Like notes in music ; first, the violet ray,
Then indigo, trembling softly into blue ;
Then green and yellow, quivering side by side ;
Then orange, mellowing richly into red.
Then, in the screen, he made a small round hole
Like to the first ; and through it passed once more

Each separate coloured ray. He let it strike
Another prism of glass, and saw each hue
Bent at a different angle from its path,
The red the least, the violet ray the most;
But all in scale and order, all precise
As notes in music. Last, he took a lens,
And, passing through it all those coloured rays,
Drew them together again, remerging all
On that dark screen, in one white spot of light.

So, watching, testing, proving, he resolved
The seeming random glories of our day
Into a constant harmony, and found
How in the whiteness of the sunlight sleep
Compounded, all the colours of the world.
He saw how raindrops in the clouds of heaven
Breaking the light, revealed that sevenfold arch
Of colours, ranged as on his own dark screen,
Though now they spanned the mountains and wild seas.
Then, where that old-world order had gone down
Beneath a darker deluge, he beheld
Gleams of the great new order and recalled
—Fraught with new meaning and a deeper hope—
That covenant which God made with all mankind
Throughout all generations: *I will set*
My bow in the cloud, that henceforth ye may know
How deeper than the wreckage of your dreams
Abides My law, in beauty and in power.

II

Yet for that exquisite balance of the mind,
He, too, must pay the price. He stood alone
Bewildered, at the sudden assault of fools

On this, his first discovery.
" I have lost
The most substantial blessing of my quiet
To follow a vain shadow.
I would fain
Attempt no more. So few can understand,
Or read one thought. So many are ready at once
To swoop and sting. Indeed I would withdraw
For ever from philosophy." So he wrote
In grief, the mightiest mind of that new age.
Let those who'd stone the Roman Curia
For all the griefs that Galileo knew
Remember the dark hours that well-nigh quenched
The splendour of that spirit. He could not sleep.
Yet, with that patience of the God in man
That still must seek the Splendour whence it came,
Through midnight hours of mockery and defeat,
In loneliness and hopelessness and tears,
He laboured on. He had no power to see
How, after many years, when he was dead,
Out of this new discovery men should make
An instrument to explore the farthest stars
And, delicately dividing their white rays,
Divine what metals in their beauty burned,
Extort red secrets from the heart of Mars,
Or measure the molten iron in the sun.
He bent himself to nearer, lowlier tasks;
And seeing, first, that those deflected rays,
Though it were only by the faintest bloom
Of colour, imperceptible to our eyes,
Must dim the vision of Galileo's glass,
He made his own new weapon of the sky,—
That first reflecting telescope which should hold
In its deep mirror, as in a breathless pool
The undistorted image of a star.

III

In that deep night where Galileo groped
Like a blind giant in dreams to find what power
Held moons and planets to their constant road
Through vastness, ordered like a moving fleet;
What law so married them that they could not clash
Or sunder, but still kept their rhythmic pace
As if those ancient tales indeed were true
And some great angel helmed each gliding sphere;
Many had sought an answer. Many had caught
Gleams of the truth; and yet, as when a torch
Is waved above a multitude at night,
And shows wild streams of faces, all confused,
But not the single law that knits them all
Into an ordered nation, so our skies
For all those fragmentary glimpses, whirled
In chaos, till one eagle-spirit soared,
Found the one law that bound them all in one,
And through that awful unity upraised
The soul to That which made and guides them all.

Did Newton, dreaming in his orchard there
Beside the dreaming Witham, see the moon
Burn like a huge gold apple in the boughs
And wonder why should moons not fall like fruit?
Or did he see as those old tales declare
(Those fairy-tales that gather form and fire
Till, in one jewel, they pack the whole bright world)
A ripe fruit fall from some immortal tree
Of knowledge, while he wondered at what height
Would this earth-magnet lose its darkling power?
Would not the fruit fall earthward, though it grew
High o'er the hills as yonder brightening cloud?
Would not the selfsame power that plucked the fruit

Draw the white moon, then, sailing in the blue?
Then, in one flash, as light and song are born,
And the soul wakes, he saw it—this dark earth
Holding the moon that else would fly through space
To her sure orbit, as a stone is held
In a whirled sling; and, by the selfsame power,
Her sister planets guiding all their moons;
While, exquisitely balanced and controlled
In one vast system, moons and planets wheeled
Around one sovran majesty the sun.

IV

Light and more light! the spark from heaven was there,
The flash of that reintegrating fire
Flung from heaven's altars, where all light is born,
To feed the imagination of mankind
With vision, and reveal all worlds in one.
But let no dreamer dream that his great work
Sprang, armed, like Pallas from the Thunderer's brain.
With infinite patience he must test and prove
His vision now, in those clear courts of Truth
Whose absolute laws (bemocked by shallower minds
As less than dreams, less than the faithless faith
That fears the Truth, lest Truth should slay the dream)
Are man's one guide to his transcendent heaven;
For there's no wandering splendour in the soul,
But in the highest heaven of all is one
With absolute reality. None can climb
Back to that Fount of Beauty but through pain.
Long, long he toiled, comparing first the curves
Traced by the cannon-ball as it soared and fell
With that great curving road across the sky
Traced by the sailing moon.

Was earth a loadstone

Holding them to their paths by that dark force
Whose mystery men have cloaked beneath a name?
Yet, when he came to test and prove, he found
That all the great deflections of the moon,
Her shining cadences from the path direct,
Were utterly inharmonious with the law
Of that dark force, at such a distance acting,
Measured from earth's own centre. . . .
For three long years, Newton withheld his hope
Until that day when light was brought from France,
New light, new hope, in one small glistening fact,
Clear-cut as any diamond; and to him
Loaded with all significance, like the point
Of light that shows where constellations burn.
Picard in France—all glory to her name
Who is herself a light among all lands—
Had measured earth's diameter once more
And with a new precision.
To the throng,
Those few corrected ciphers, his results
Were less than nothing; yet they changed the world.
For Newton seized them and, with trembling hands,
Began to work his problem out anew.
Then, then, as on the page those figures turned
To hieroglyphs of heaven, and he beheld
The moving moon, with awful cadences
Falling into the path his law ordained,
Even to the foot and second, his hand shook
And dropped the pencil.
"Work it out for me,"
He cried to those around him; for the weight
Of that celestial music overwhelmed him;
And, on his page, those burning hieroglyphs
Were Thrones and Principalities and Powers . . .
For far beyond, immeasurably far

Beyond our sun, he saw that river of suns
We call the Milky Way, that glittering host
Powdering the night, each grain a solar blaze
Divided from its neighbour by a gulf
Too wide for thought to measure; each a sun
Huger than ours, with its own fleet of worlds,
Visible and invisible. Those bright throngs
That seemed dispersed like a defeated host
Through blindly wandering skies, now, at the word
Of one great dreamer, height o'er height revealed
Hints of a vaster order, and moved on
In boundless intricacies of harmony
Around one centre, deeper than all suns,
The burning throne of God.

V

He could not sleep. That intellect, whose wings
Dared the cold ultimate heights of Space and Time
Sank, like a wounded eagle, with dazed eyes
Back, headlong through the clouds to throb on earth.
What shaft had pierced him? That which also pierced
His great forebears—the hate of little men.
They flocked around him, and they flung their dust
Into the sensitive eyes, and laughed to see
How dust could blind them.
If one prickling grain
Could so put out his vision and so torment
That delicate brain, what weakness! How the mind
That seemed to dwarf us, dwindles! Is he mad?
So buzzed the fools, whose ponderous mental wheels
Nor dust, nor grit, nor stones, nor rocks could irk
Even for an instant.
Newton could not sleep,
But all that careful malice could design
Was blindly fostered by well-meaning folly,

And great sane folk like Mr. Samuel Pepys
Canvassed his weakness and slept sound all night.
For little Samuel with his rosy face
Came chirping into a coffee-house one day
Like a plump robin, " Sir, the unhappy state
Of Mr. Isaac Newton grieves me much.
Last week I had a letter from him, filled
With strange complainings, very curious hints,
Such as, I grieve to say, are common signs
—I have observed it often—of worse to come.
He said that he could neither eat nor sleep
Because of all the embroilments he was in,
Hinting at nameless enemies. Then he begged
My pardon, very strangely. I believe
Physicians would confirm me in my fears.
'Tis very sad. . . . Only last night, I found
Among my papers certain lines composed
By—whom d'you think ?—My lord of Halifax
(Or so dear Mrs. Porterhouse assured me)
Expressing, sir, the uttermost satisfaction
In Mr. Newton's talent. Sir, he wrote
Answering the charge that science would put out
The light of beauty, these very handsome lines :

' When Newton walked by Witham stream
There fell no chilling shade
To blight the drifting naiad's dream
Or make her garland fade.

The mist of sun was not less bright
That crowned Urania's hair.
He robbed it of its colder light,
But left the rainbow there.'

They are very neat and handsome, you'll agree.
Solid in sense as Dryden at his best,

And smooth as Waller, but with something more,—
That touch of grace, that airier elegance
Which only rank can give.
'Tis very sad
That one so nobly praised should—well, no matter !—
I am told, sir, that these troubles all began
At Cambridge, when his manuscripts were burned.
He had been working, in his curious way,
All through the night ; and, in the morning greyness,
Went down to chapel, leaving on his desk
A lighted candle. You can imagine it,—
A sadly sloven altar to his Muse,
Littered with papers, cups, and greasy plates
Of untouched food. I am told that he would eat
His Monday's breakfast, sir, on Tuesday morning,
Such was his absent way !
When he returned,
He found that Diamond (his little dog
Named Diamond, for a black patch near his tail)
Had overturned the candle. All his work
Was burned to ashes.
It struck him to the quick,
Though, when his terrier fawned about his feet,
He showed no anger. He was heard to say,
' O Diamond, Diamond, little do you know . . .'
But, from that hour, ah, well, we'll say no more."

Halley was there that day, and spoke up sharply,
" Sir, there are hints and hints ! Do you *mean* more ? "
—" I do, sir," chirruped Samuel, mightily pleased
To find all eyes, for once, on his fat face.
" I fear his intellects are disordered, sir."
—" Good ! That's an answer ! I can deal with that.
But tell me first," quoth Halley, " why he wrote
That letter, a week ago, to Mr. Pepys."

—" Why, sir," piped Samuel, innocent of the trap.
" I had an argument in this coffee-house
Last week, with certain gentlemen, on the laws
Of chance, and what fair hopes a man might have
Of throwing six at dice. I happened to say
That Mr. Isaac Newton was my friend,
And promised I would sound him."
" Sir," said Halley,
" You'll pardon me, but I forgot to tell you
I heard, a minute since, outside these doors,
A very modish woman of the town,
Or else a most delicious lady of fashion,
A melting creature, with a bold black eye,
A bosom like twin doves ; and, sir, a mouth
Like a Turk's dream of Paradise. She cooed,
' Is Mr. Pepys within ? ' I greatly fear
That they denied you to her ! "
Off ran Pepys !
" A hint's a hint," laughed Halley, " and so to bed."
But, as for Isaac Newton, let me say,
Whatever his embroilments were, he solved
With just one hour of thought, not long ago,
The problem set by Leibnitz as a challenge
To all of Europe. He published his result
Anonymously, but Leibnitz, when he saw it,
Cried out, at once, old enemy as he was,
" That's Newton, none but Newton ! From this claw
I know the old lion, in his midnight lair."

VI

(Sir Isaac Newton writes to Mrs. Vincent at Woolthorpe)

Your letter, on my eightieth birthday, wakes
Memories, like violets, in this London gloom.

You have never failed, for more than three-score years,
To send these annual greetings from the haunts
Where you and I were boy and girl together.
A day must come—it cannot now be far—
When I shall have no power to thank you for them,
So let me tell you now that, all my life,
They have come to me with healing in their wings
Like birds from home, birds from the happy woods
Above the Witham, where you walked with me
When you and I were young.
Do you remember
Old Barley—how he tried to teach us drawing?
He found some promise, I believe, in you,
But quite despaired of me.
I treasure all
Those little sketches that you sent to me
Each Christmas, carrying each some glimpse of home.
There's one I love that shows the narrow lane
Behind the schoolhouse, where I had that bout
Of schoolboy fisticuffs. I have never known
More pleasure, I believe, than when I beat
That black-haired bully and won, for my reward,
Those April smiles from you.
I see you still
Standing among the fox-gloves in the hedge;
And just behind you, in the field, I know
There was a patch of aromatic flowers,—
Rest-harrow, was it? Yes; their tangled roots
Pluck at the harrow; halt the sharp harrow of thought,
Even in old age. I never breathe their scent
But I am back in boyhood, dreaming there
Over some book, among the diligent bees,
Until you join me, and we dream together.
They called me lazy, then. Oddly enough
It was that fight that stirred my mind to beat

My bully at his books, and head the school;
Blind rivalry, at first. By such fond tricks
The invisible Power that shapes us—not ourselves—
Punishes, teaches, leads us gently on
Like children, all our lives, until we grasp
A sudden meaning and are born, through death
Into full knowledge that our Guide was Love.
Another picture shows those woods of ours,
Around whose warm dark edges in the spring
Primroses, knots of living sunlight, woke;
And, always, you, their radiant shepherdess
From Elfland, led them rambling back for me,
The dew still clinging to their golden fleece,
Through these grey memory-mists.
Another shows
My old sun-dial. You say that it is known
As "Isaac's dial" still. I took great pains
To set it rightly. If it has not shifted
'Twill mark the time long after I am gone;
Not like those curious water-clocks I made
Do you remember? They worked well at first;
But the least particles in the water clogged
The holes through which it dripped; and so, one day,
We two came home so late that we were sent
Supperless to our beds; and suffered much
From the world's harshness, as we thought it then.
Would God that we might taste that harshness now.

I cannot send you what you've sent to me;
And so I wish you'll never thank me more
For those poor gifts I have sent from year to year.
I send another, and hope that you can use it
To buy yourself those comforts which you need
This Christmas-time.
How strange it is to wake

And find that half a century has gone by,
With all our endless youth.
They talk to me
Of my discoveries, prate of undying fame
Too late to help me. Anything I achieved
Was done through work and patience; and the men
Who sought quick roads to glory for themselves
Were capable of neither. So I won
Their hatred, and it often hampered me,
Because it vexed my mind.
This world of ours
Would give me all, now I have ceased to want it;
For I sit here, alone, a sad old man,
Sipping his orange-water, nodding to sleep,
Not caring any more for aught they say,
Not caring any more for praise or blame;
But dreaming—things we dreamed of, long ago,
In childhood.
You and I had laughed away
That boy and girl affair. We were too poor
For anything but laughter.
I am old;
And you, twice wedded and twice widowed, still
Retain, through all your nearer joys and griefs,
The old affection. Vaguely our blind old hands
Grope for each other in this growing dark
And deepening loneliness,—to say "good-bye."
Would that my words could tell you all my heart;
But even my words grow old.
Perhaps these lines,
Written not long ago, may tell you more.
I have no skill in verse, despite the praise
Your kindness gave me, once; but since I wrote
Thinking of you, among the woods of home,
My heart was in them. Let them turn to yours:

Give me, for friends, my own true folk
Who kept the very word they spoke;
Whose quiet prayers, from day to day,
Have brought the heavens about my way.

Not those whose intellectual pride
Would quench the only lights that guide;
Confuse the lines 'twixt good and ill
Then throne their own capricious will;

Not those whose eyes in mockery scan
The deeper, simpler dreams of man:
Not those keen wits, so quick to hurt,
So swift to trip you in the dirt.

Not those who'd pluck your mystery out,
Yet never saw your last redoubt;
Who kill the music at your heart,
Then flay you for your lack of art.

Give me those eyes I used to know
Where thoughts like angels come and go;
—Not glittering eyes, nor dimmed by books,
But eyes through which the deep soul looks.

Give me the quiet hands and face
That never strove for fame and place;
The soul whose love, so many a day,
Has brought the heavens about my way.

VII

Was it a dream, that low dim-lighted room
With that dark periwigged phantom of Dean Swift
Writing, beside a fire, to one he loved,—
Beautiful Catherine Barton, once the light
Of Newton's house, and his half-sister's child?
" Yes, Catherine Barton, I am brave enough
To face this pale, unhappy, wistful ghost
Of our departed friendship.
It was I
Savage and mad, a snarling kennel of sins,
" Your Holiness," as you called me, with that smile
Which even your ghost would quietly turn on me—
Who raised it up. It has no terrors, dear,
And I shall never lay it while I live.
You write to me. You think I have the power
To shield the fame of Newton from a lie.
Poor little ghost! You think I hold the keys
Not only of Parnassus, then, but hell.

There is a tale abroad that Newton owed
His public office to Lord Halifax,
Your secret lover. Coarseness, as you know,
Is my peculiar privilege. I'll be plain,
And let them wince who are whispering in the dark.
They are hinting that he gained his public post
Through you, his flesh and blood; and that he knew
You were his patron's mistress!
Yes, I know
The coffee-house that hatched it—to be scotched,
Nay, killed, before one snuff-box could say " snap,"
Had it not been for that ironic point
Which was not aimed at Newton, or at you,
But at the ways of courts and governments
And used this pretty tale to drive it home.
The dates are clear. You need no more defence.

Historians will explore it, soon or late,
And show you for the laughing child you were
When Newton won his office.
For yourself
You say you have no fear. Your only thought
Is that they'll soil his fame. Ah, yes, they'll try,
But they'll not hurt it. For all time to come
It stands there, firm as marble and as pure.
They can do nothing that the sun and rain
Will not erase at last.
Let venomous tongues
Flicker against that marble as they will,
They cannot wound it.
I am far more grieved
For you, who sit there wondering now, too late,
If it were some suspicion, some dark hint
Newton had heard that robbed him of his sleep,
And almost broke his mind up. I recall
How the town buzzed that Newton had gone mad.
You copy me that sad letter which he wrote
To Locke, wherein he begs him to forgive
The hard words he had spoken, thinking Locke
Had tried to embroil him, as he says, with women ;
A piteous, humble letter.
Had he heard
Some hint of scandal that he could not breathe
To you, because he honoured you too well ?
I cannot tell. His mind was greatly troubled
With other things. England has many ways
Of smothering her great men. The Mint for Newton,
While Flamsteed, at the Royal Observatory
Refused him information. Ah, my dear,
But we must still remember how they tried
To atone, in that dark Abbey of theirs, at last
With one last burial. So farewell, my dear Kate,
And God Almighty bless you, and me, too.

VIII

(*Halley writes to Newton's niece*)

He always walked aloof,
Treading a deeper, stranger world than ours.
Have you not told me how he would forget
Even to eat and drink, when he was wrapt
In those miraculous new discoveries,
And, under this wild maze of shadow and sun
Beheld—though not the Master Player's hand—
The keys from which His organ music rolls,
Those visible symphonies of wild cloud and light
Which clothe the invisible world for mortal eyes?
I have heard that Leibnitz whispered to the court
That Newton was an "atheist." Leibnitz knew
His audience. He could stoop to it.
Fools have said
That knowledge drives out wonder from the world;
They'll say it still, though all the dust's ablaze
With miracles at their feet; while Newton's laws
Foretell that knowledge one day shall be song,
And those whom Truth has taken to her heart
Find that it beats in music.
Even this age
Has glimmerings of it. Newton never saw
His own full victory; but at least he knew
That all the world was linked in one again;
And, if men found new worlds in years to come,
These too must join the universal song.
That's why true poets love him; and you'll find
Their love will cancel all that hate can do.
They are the sentinels of the House of Fame;
And that quick challenging couplet from the pen
Of Alexander Pope is answer enough
To all those whisperers round the outer doors.

There's Addison, too. The very spirit and thought
Of Newton moved to music when he wrote
The Spacious Firmament. Some keen-eyed age to come
Will say, though Newton seldom wrote a verse,
That music was his own and speaks his faith.

And, last, for those who doubt his faith in God
And man's immortal destiny, there remains
The granite monument of his own great work,
That dark cathedral of man's intellect,
The vast " Principia," pointing to the skies,
Wherein our intellectual king proclaimed
The task of science,—through this wilderness
Of Time and Space and false appearances,
To make the path straight from effect to cause,
Until we come to that First Cause of all,
The Power, above, beyond the blind machine,
The Primal Power, the originating Power,
Which cannot be mechanical. He affirmed it
With absolute certainty. Whence arises all
This order, this unbroken chain of law,
This human will, this death-defying love ?
Whence, but from some divine transcendent Power,
Not less, but infinitely more than these,
Because it is their Fountain and their Guide.
Fools in their hearts have said, " Whence comes this Power,
Why throw the riddle back this one stage more ? "
And Newton, from a height above all worlds
Answered and answers still :
" This universe
Exists, and by that one impossible fact
Declares itself a miracle ; postulates
An infinite Power within itself, a Whole
Greater than any part, a Unity
Sustaining all, binding all worlds in one.

This is the Mystery, palpable here and now,
'Tis not the lack of links within the chain
From cause to cause, but that the chain exists;
That's the unfathomable mystery,
The one unquestioned miracle that we *know*,
Implying every attribute of God,
The ultimate, absolute, omnipresent Power,
In its own being, deep and high as heaven.
But men still trace the greater to the less,
Account for soul with flesh and dreams with dust,
Forgetting in their manifold world the One,
In whom for every splendour shining here
Abides an equal power behind the veil.
Was the eye contrived by blindly moving atoms,
Or the still-listening ear fulfilled with music
By forces without knowledge of sweet sounds?
Are nerves and brain so sensitively fashioned
That they convey these pictures of the world
Into the very substance of our life,
While That from which we came, the Power that made us,
Is drowned in blank unconsciousness of all?
Does it not from the things we know appear
That there exists a Being, incorporeal,
Living, intelligent, who in infinite space,
As in His infinite sensory, perceives
Things in themselves, by His immediate presence
Everywhere? Of which things, we see no more
Than images only, flashed through nerves and brain
To our small sensories?
What is all science then
But pure religion, seeking everywhere
The true commandments, and through many forms
The eternal power that binds all worlds in one?
It is man's age-long struggle to draw near
His maker, learn His thoughts, discern His law,—

A boundless task, in whose infinitude,
As in the unfolding light and law of love,
Abides our hope, and our eternal joy.
I know not how my work may seem to others——"
So wrote our mightiest mind—" But to myself
I seem a child that, wandering all day long
Upon the sea-shore, gathers here a shell,
And there a pebble, coloured by the wave,
While the great ocean of truth, from sky to sky
Stretches before him, boundless, unexplored."

He has explored it now, and needs of me
Neither defence nor tribute. His own work
Remains his monument. He rose at last so near
The Power divine that none can nearer go ;
None in this age ! To carry on his fire
We must await a mightier age to come.

VI

WILLIAM HERSCHEL CONDUCTS

Was it a dream ?—that crowded concert-room
In Bath ; that sea of ruffles and laced coats ;
And William Herschel, in his powdered wig,
Waiting upon the platform, to conduct
His choir and Linley's orchestra ? He stood
Tapping his music-rest, lost in his own thoughts
And (did I hear or dream them ?) all were mine :

My periwig's askew, my ruffle stained
With grease from my new telescope !
Ach, to-morrow
How Caroline will be vexed, although she grows
Almost as bad as I, who cannot leave
My workshop for one evening.
I must give
One last recital at St. Margaret's,
And then—farewell to music.
Who can lead
Two lives at once ?
Yet—it has taught me much,
Thrown curious lights upon our world, to pass
From one life to another. Much that I took
For substance turns to shadow. I shall see
No throngs like this again ; wring no more praise
Out of their hearts ; forego that instant joy
—Let those who have not known it count it vain—
When human souls at once respond to yours.

Here, on the brink of fortune and of fame,
As men account these things, the moment comes
When I must choose between them and the stars;
And I have chosen.
Handel, good old friend,
We part to-night. Hereafter, I must watch
That other wand, to which the worlds keep time.

What has decided me? That marvellous night
When—ah, how difficult it will be to guide,
With all these wonders whirling through my brain!—
After a Pump-room concert I came home
Hot-foot, out of the fluttering sea of fans,
Coquelicot-ribboned belles and periwigged beaux,
To my Newtonian telescope.
The design
Was his; but more than half the joy my own,
Because it was the work of my own hand,
A new one, with an eye six inches wide,
Better than even the best that Newton made.
Then, as I turned it on the *Gemini*,
And the deep stillness of those constant lights,
Castor and Pollux, lucid pilot-stars,
Began to calm the fever of my blood,
I saw, O, first of all mankind I saw
The disk of my new planet gliding there
Beyond our tumults, in that realm of peace.

What will they christen it? Ach—not *Herschel*, no!
Nor *Georgium Sidus*, as I once proposed;
Although he scarce could lose it, as he lost
That world in 'seventy-six.
Indeed, so far
From trying to tax it, he has granted me

How much ?—two hundred golden pounds a year,
In the great name of science,—half the cost
Of one state-coach, with all those worlds to win !
Well—well—we must be grateful. This mad king
Has done far more than all the worldly-wise,
Who'll charge even this to madness.
I believe
One day he'll have me pardoned for that . . . crime,
When I escaped—deserted, some would say—
From those drill-sergeants in my native land ;
Deserted drill for music, as I now
Desert my music for the orchestral spheres.
No. This new planet is only new to man.
His majesty has done much. Yet, as my friend
Declared last night, " Never did monarch buy
Honour so cheaply " ; and—he has not bought it.
I think that it should bear some ancient name,
And wear it like a crown ; some deep, dark name,
Like *Uranus*, known to remoter gods.

How strange it seems—this buzzing concert-room !
There's Doctor Burney bowing and, behind him,
His fox-eyed daughter Fanny.
Is it a dream,
These crowding midgets, dense as clustering bees
In a great bee-skep ?
Now, as I lift my wand,
A silence grips them, and the strings begin,
Throbbing. The faint lights flicker in gusts of sound.
Before me, glimmering like a crescent moon,
The dim half circle of the choir awaits
Its own appointed time.
Beside me now,
Watching my wand, plump and immaculate
From buckled shoes to that white bunch of lace

Under his chin, the midget tenor rises,
Music in hand, a linnet and a king.
The bullfinch bass, that other emperor,
Leans back indifferently, and clears his throat
As if to say, " This prelude leads to *Me !* "
While, on their own proud thrones, on either hand,
The sumptuously bosomed midget queens,
Contralto and soprano, jealously eye
Each other's plumage.
Round me the music throbs
With an immortal passion. I grow aware
Of an appalling mystery. . . . We, this throng
Of midgets, playing, listening, tense and still,
Are sailing on a midget ball of dust
We call our planet; will have sailed through space
Ten thousand leagues before this music ends.
What does it mean? O, God, what *can* it mean?—
This weird hushed ant-hill with a thousand eyes;
These midget periwigs; all those little blurs,
Tier over tier, of faces, masks of flesh,
Corruptible, hiding each its hopes and dreams,
Its tragi-comic dreams.
And all this throng
Will be forgotten, mixed with dust, crushed out,
Before this book of music is outworn
Or that tall organ crumbles. Violins
Outlast their players. Other hands may touch
That harpsichord; but ere this planet makes
Another threescore journeys round its sun,
These breathing listeners will have vanished. Whither?
I watch my moving hands, and they grow strange!
What is it moves this body? What am I?
How came I here, a ghost, to hear that voice
Of infinite compassion, far away,
Above the throbbing strings, hark! *Comfort ye* . . .

If music lead us to a cry like this,
I think I shall not lose it in the skies.
I do but follow its own secret law
As long ago I sought to understand
Its golden mathematics; taught myself
The way to lay one stone upon another,
Before I dared to dream that I might build
My Holy City of Song. I gave myself
To all its branches. How they stared at me,
Those men of "sensibility," when I said
That algebra, conic sections, fluxions, all
Pertained to music. Let them stare again.
Old Kepler knew, by instinct, what I now
Desire to learn. I have resolved to leave
No tract of heaven unvisited.
To-night,
—The music carries me back to it again!—
I see beyond this island universe,
Beyond our sun, and all those other suns
That throng the Milky Way, far, far beyond,
A thousand little wisps, faint nebulæ,
Luminous fans and milky streaks of fire;
Some like soft brushes of electric mist
Streaming from one bright point; others that spread
And branch, like growing systems; others discrete,
Keen, ripe, with stars in clusters; others drawn back
By central forces into one dense death,
Thence to be kindled into fire, reborn,
And scattered abroad once more in a delicate spray
Faint as the mist by one bright dewdrop breathed
At dawn, and yet a universe like our own;
Each wisp a universe, a vast galaxy
Wide as our night of stars.
The Milky Way
In which our sun is drowned, to these would seem

Less than to us their faintest drift of haze;
Yet we, who are borne on one dark grain of dust
Around one indistinguishable spark
Of star-mist, lost in one lost feather of light,
Can by the strength of our own thought, ascend
Through universe after universe; trace their growth
Through boundless time, their glory, their decay;
And, on the invisible road of law, more firm
Than granite, range through all their length and breadth,
Their height and depth, past, present, and to come.
So, those who follow the great Workmaster's law
From small things up to great, may one day learn
The structure of the heavens, discern the whole
Within the part, as men through Love see God.

Oh, holy night, deep night of stars, whose peace
Descends upon the troubled mind like dew,
Healing it with the sense of that pure reign
Of constant law, enduring through all change;
Shall I not, one day, after faithful years,
Find that thy heavens are built on music, too,
And hear, once more, above thy throbbing worlds
This voice of all compassion, *Comfort ye,*—
Yes—*comfort ye, my people, saith your God?*

VII

SIR JOHN HERSCHEL REMEMBERS

TRUE type of all, from his own father's hand
He caught the fire ; and, though he carried it far
Into new regions ; and, from southern fields
Of yellow lupin, added host on host
To those bright armies which his father knew,
Surely the crowning hour of all his life
Was when, his task accomplished, he returned
A lonely pilgrim to the twilit shrine
Of first beginnings and his father's youth
There, in the Octagon Chapel, with bared head
Grey, honoured for his father and himself,
He touched the glimmering keyboard, touched the books
Those dear lost hands had touched so long ago.

" Strange that these poor inanimate things outlast
The life that used them.
Yes. I should like to try
This good old friend of his. You'll leave me here
An hour or so ? "
His hands explored the stops ;
And, while the music breathed what else were mute,
His mind through many thoughts and memories ranged.
Picture on picture passed before him there
In living colours, painted on the gloom :
Not what the world acclaimed, the great work crowned,
But all that went before, the years of toil ;

The years of infinite patience, hope, despair.
He saw the little house where all began,
His father's first resolve to explore the sky,
His first defeat, when telescopes were found
Too costly for a music-master's purse;
And then that dogged and all-conquering will
Declaring, " Be it so. I'll make my own,
A better than even the best that Newton made."
He saw his first rude telescope—a tube
Of pasteboard, with a lens at either end;
And then,—that arduous growth to size and power
With each new instrument, as his knowledge grew;
And, to reward each growth, a deeper heaven.
He saw the good Aunt Caroline's dismay
When her trim drawing-room, as by wizardry, turned
Into a workshop, where her brother's hands
Cut, ground and burnished, hour on aching hour,
Month after month, new mirrors of the sky.

Yet, while from dawn to dark her brother moved
Around some new-cut mirror, burnishing it,
Knowing that if he once removed his hands
The surface would be dimmed and must forego
Its heaven for ever, her quiet hands would raise
Food to his lips; or, with that musical voice
Which once—for she, too, offered her sacrifice—
Had promised her fame, she whiled away the hours
Reading how, long ago, Aladdin raised
The djinns, by burnishing that old battered lamp;
Or, from Cervantes, how one crazy soul
Tilting at windmills, challenged a purblind world.

He saw her seized at last by that same fire,
Burning to help, a sleepless Vestal, dowered
With lightning-quickness, rushing from desk to clock,

Or measuring distances at dead of night
Between the lamp-micrometer and his eyes.

He saw her in mid-winter, hurrying out,
A slim shawled figure through the drifted snow,
To help him ; saw her fall with a stifled cry,
Gashing herself upon that buried hook,
And struggling up, out of the blood-stained drift,
To greet him with a smile.
" For any soldier,
This wound," the surgeon muttered, " would have meant
Six weeks in hospital."
Not six days for her !
" I am glad these nights were cloudy, and we lost
So little," was all she said.
Sir John pulled out
Another stop. A little ironical march
Of flutes began to goose-step through the gloom.
He saw that first " success " ! Ay, call it so !
The royal command,—the court desires to see
The planet Saturn and his marvellous rings
On Friday night. The skies, on Friday night,
Were black with clouds. " Canute me no Canutes,"
Muttered their new magician, and unpacked
His telescope. " You shall see what you can see."
He levelled it through a window ; and they saw
" Wonderful ! Marvellous ! Glorious ! Eh, what, what ! "
A planet of paper, with a paper ring,
Lit by a lamp, in a hollow of Windsor Park,
Among the ferns, where Herne the Hunter walks,
And Falstaff found that fairies live on cheese.
Thus all were satisfied ; while, above the clouds—
The thunder of the pedals reaffirmed—
The Titan planet, every minute, rolled
Three hundred leagues upon his awful way.

Then, through that night, the *vox humana* spoke
With deeper longing than Lucretius knew
When, in his great third book, the sombre chant
Kindled and soared on those exultant wings,
Praising the master's hand from which he, too,
—Father, discoverer, hero—caught the fire.
It spoke of those vast labours, incomplete,
But, through their incompletion, infinite
In beauty, and in hope ; the task bequeathed
From dying hand to hand.
Close to his grave
Like a *memento mori* stood the hulk
Of that great weapon rusted and outworn,
Which once broke down the barriers of the sky.
" *Perrupit claustra* " ; yes, and bridged their gulfs ;
For, far beyond our solar scheme, it showed
The law that bound our planets binding still
Those coupled suns which year by year he watched
Around each other circling.
Had our own
Some distant comrade, lost among the stars ?
Should we not, one day, just as Kepler drew
His planetary music and its laws
From all those faithful records Tycho made,
Discern at last what vaster music rules
The vaster drift of stars from deep to deep ;
Around what awful Poles, those wisps of light
Those fifteen hundred universes move ?
One signal, even now, across the dark,
Declared their worlds confederate with our own ;
For, carrying many secrets, which we now
Slowly decipher, one swift messenger comes
Across the abyss . . .
The light that, flashing through the immeasurable,
From universe to universe proclaims

The single reign of law that binds them all.
We shall break up those rays and, in their lines
And colours, read the history of their stars.
Year after year, the slow sure records grow,
Awaiting their interpreter. They shall see it,
Our sons, in that far day, the swift, the strong,
The triumphing young-eyed runners with the torch.

No deep-set boundary-mark in Space or Time
Shall halt or daunt them. Who that once has seen
How truth leads on to truth, shall ever dare
To set a bound to knowledge?
" Would that he knew "
—So thought the visitant at that shadowy shrine—
" Even as the maker of a song can hear
With the soul's ear, far off, the unstricken chords
To which, by its own inner law, it climbs,
Would that my father knew how younger hands
Completed his own planetary tune;
How from the planet that his own eyes found
The mind of man would plunge into the dark,
And, blindfold, find without the help of eyes
A mightier planet, in the depths beyond."

Then, while the reeds, with quiet melodious pace
Followed the dream, as in a picture passed,
Adams, the boy at Cambridge, making his vow
By that still lamp, alone in that deep night,
Beneath the crumbling battlements of St. John's,
To know why Uranus, uttermost planet known,
Moved in a rhythm delicately astray
From all the golden harmonies ordained
By those known measures of its sister-worlds.
Was there an unknown planet, far beyond,
Sailing through unimaginable deeps

And drawing it from its path ?
Then challenging chords
Echoed the prophecy that Sir John had made,
Guided by his own faith in Newton's law :
We have not found it, but we feel it trembling
Along the lines of our analysis now
As once Columbus, from the shores of Spain,
Felt the new Continent.
Then, in swift fugues, began
A race between two nations for the prize
Of that new world.
Le Verrier in France,
Adams in England, each of them unaware
Of his own rival, at the selfsame hour
Resolved to find it.
Not by the telescope now !
Skies might be swept for æons ere one spark
Among those myriads were both found and seen
To move, at that vast distance round our sun.
They worked by faith in law alone. They knew
The wanderings of great Uranus, and they knew
The law of Newton.
By the midnight lamp,
Pencil in hand, shut in a four-walled room,
Each by pure thought must work his problem out,—
Given that law, to find the mass and place
Of that which drew their planet from his course.

There were no throngs to applaud them. Each alone,
Without the heat of conflict laboured on,
Consuming brain and nerve ; for throngs applaud
Only the flash and tinsel of their day,
Never the quiet runners with the torch.
Night after night they laboured. Line on line
Of intricate figures, moving all in law,

They marshalled. Their long columns formed and marched
From battle to battle, and no sound was heard
Of victory or defeat. They marched through snows
Bleak as the drifts that broke Napoleon's pride
And through a vaster desert. They drilled their hosts
With that divine precision of the mind
To which one second's error in a year
Were anarchy, that precision which is felt
Throbbing through music.
Month on month they toiled,
With worlds for ciphers. One rich autumn night
Brooding over his figures there alone
In Cambridge, Adams found them moving all
To one solution. To the unseeing eye
His long neat pages had no more to tell
Than any merchant's ledger, yet they shone
With epic splendour, and like trumpets pealed;
Three hundred million leagues beyond the path
Of our remotest planet, drowned in night
Another and a mightier planet rolls;
In volume, fifty times more vast than earth,
And of so huge an orbit that its year
Wellnigh outlasts our nations. Though it moves
A thousand leagues an hour, it has not ranged
Thrice through its seasons since Columbus sailed,
Or more than once since Galileo died.

He took his proofs to Greenwich. "Sweep the skies
Within this limited region now," he said.
"You'll find your moving planet. I'm not more
Than one degree in error."
He left his proofs;
But Airy, king of Greenwich, looked askance
At unofficial genius in the young,
And pigeon-holed that music of the spheres.

Nine months he waited till Le Verrier, too,
Pointed to that same region of the sky.
Then Airy, opening his big sleepy lids,
Bade Challis use his telescope,—too late,
To make that honour all his country's own ;
For all Le Verrier's proofs were now with Galle
Who, being German, had his star-charts ready
And, in that region, found one needle-point
Had moved. A monster planet !
Honour to France !
Honour to England, too, the cry began,
Who found it also, though she drowsed at Greenwich.
So—as the French said, with some sting in it—
" We gave the name of Neptune to our prize
Because our neighbour England rules the sea."

" Honour to all," say we ; for, in these wars,
Whoever wins a battle wins for all.
But, most of all, honour to him who found
The law that was a lantern to their feet,—
Newton, the first whose thought could soar beyond
The bounds of human vision and declare,
" Thus saith the law of Nature and of God
Concerning things invisible."
This new world
What was it but one harmony the more
In that great music which himself had heard,—
The chant of those reintegrated spheres
Moving around their sun, while all things moved
Around one deeper Light, revealed by law,
Beyond all vision, past all understanding,
Yet darkly shadowed forth for dreaming men
On earth in music . . .
Music, all comes back
To music in the end.

Then, in the gloom
Of the Octagon Chapel, the dreamer lifted up
His face, as if to all those great forebears.
The quivering organ rolled upon the dusk
His dream of that new symphony,—the sun
Chanting to all his planets on their way
While, stop to stop replying, height o'er height,
His planets answered, voices of a dream :

THE SUN

Light, on the far faint planets that attend me !
Light ! But for me—the fury and the fire.
My white-hot maelstroms, the red storms that rend me
Can yield them still the harvest they desire.

I kiss with light their sunward-lifted faces.
With dew-drenched flowers I crown their dusky brows.
They praise me, lightly, from their pleasant places.
Their birds belaud me, lightly, from their boughs.

And men, on lute and lyre, have breathed their pleasure.
They have watched Apollo's golden chariot roll ;
Hymned his bright wheels, but never mine that measure
A million leagues of flame from Pole to Pole.

Like harbour-lights the stars divide before me,
I draw my worlds ten thousand leagues a day.
Their far blue seas like April eyes adore me.
They follow, dreaming, on my soundless way.

How should they know, who wheel around my burning,
What torments bore them, or what power am I,
I, that with all those worlds around me turning,
Sail, every hour, from sky to deepening sky ?

My planets, these live embers of my passion,
 These children of my hurricanes of flame,
Flung thro' the night, for midnight to refashion,
 Praise, and forget, the splendour whence they came.

THE EARTH

Was it a dream that, in those bright dominions,
 Are other worlds that sing, with lives like mine,
Lives that with beating hearts and broken pinions
 Aspire and fall, half-mortal, half-divine?

A grain of dust among those glittering legions—
 Am I, I only, touched with joy and tears?
O, silver sisters, from your azure regions,
 Breathe, once again, your music of the spheres:—

VENUS

A nearer sun, a rose of light arises,
 To clothe my glens with richer clouds of flowers,
To paint my clouds with ever new surprises
 And wreathe with mist my rosier domes and towers;

Where now, to praise their gods, a throng assembles
 Whose hopes and dreams no sphere but mine has known.
On other worlds the same warm sunlight trembles;
 But life, love, worship, these are mine alone.

MARS

And now, as dewdrops in the dawn-light glisten,
 Remote and cold—see—Earth and Venus roll.
We signalled them—in music! Did they listen?
 Could they not hear those whispers of the soul?

May not their flesh have sealed that fount of glory,
That pure ninth sense which told us of mankind?
Can some deep sleep bereave them of our story
As darkness hides all colours from the blind?

JUPITER

I that am sailing deeper skies and dimmer,
Twelve million leagues beyond the path of Mars,
Salute the sun, that cloudy pearl, whose glimmer
Renews my spring and steers me through the stars.

Think not that I by distances am darkened.
My months are years; yet light is in mine eyes.
Mine eyes are not as yours. Mine ears have hearkened
To sounds from earth. Five moons enchant my skies.

SATURN

And deeper yet, like molten opal shining
My belt of rainbow glory softly streams,
And seven white moons around me intertwining
Hide my vast beauty in a mist of dreams.

Huge is my orbit; and your flickering planet
A mote that flecks your sun, that faint white star;
Yet, in my magic pools, I still can scan it;
For I have ways to look on worlds afar.

URANUS

And deeper yet—twelve million leagues of twilight
Divide mine empire even from Saturn's ken.
Is there a world whose light is not as my light,
A midget world of light-imprisoned men?

Shut from this inner vision that hath found me,
They hunt bright shadows, painted to betray;
And know not that, because their night hath drowned me,
My giants walk with gods in boundless day.

Neptune

Plunge through immensity anew and find me.
Though scarce I see your sun,—that dying spark—
Across a myriad leagues it still can bind me
To my sure path, and steer me through the dark.

I sail through vastness, and its rhythms hold me,
Though threescore earths could in my volume sleep!
Whose are the might and music that enfold me?
Whose is the law that guides me thro' the Deep?

The Sun

I hear their song. They wheel around my burning!
I know their orbits; but what path have I?
I that with all those worlds around me turning
Sail, every hour, ten thousand leagues of sky?

My planets, these live embers of my passion,
And I, too, filled with music and with flame,
Flung thro' the night, for midnight to refashion,
Praise, and forget, the splendour whence we came.

EPILOGUE

ONCE more upon the mountain's lonely height
I woke, and round me heard the sea-like sound
Of pine-woods, as the solemn night-wind washed
Through the long canyons and precipitous gorges
Where coyotes moaned and eagles made their nest.
Once more, far, far below, I saw the lights
Of distant cities, at the mountain's feet,
Clustered like constellations . . .
Over me, like the dome of a strange shrine,
Housing our great new weapon of the sky,
And moving on its axis like a moon
Glimmered the new Uraniborg.
Shadows passed
Like monks, between it and the low grey walls
That lodged them, like a fortress in the rocks,
Their monastery of thought.
A shadow neared me.
I heard, once more, an eager living voice:

" Year after year, the slow sure records grow.
I wish that old Copernicus could see
How, through his truth, that once dispelled a dream,
Broke the false axle-trees of heaven, destroyed
All central certainty in the universe,
And seemed to dwarf mankind, the spirit of man
Laid hold on law, that Jacob's-ladder of light,
And mounting, slowly, surely, step by step,
Entered into its kingdom and its power.
For just as Tycho's tables of the stars

Within the bounds of our own galaxy
Led Kepler to the music of his laws,
So, father and son, the Herschels, with their charts
Of all those fire-mists, those faint nebulæ,
Those hosts of drifting universes, lead
Our new discoverers to yet mightier laws
Enthroned above all worlds.
We have not found them,
And yet—only the intellectual fool
Dreams in his heart that even his brain can tick
In isolated measure, a centre of law,
Amidst the whirl of universal chaos.
For law descends from law. Though all the spheres
Through all the abysmal depths of Space were blown
Like dust before a colder darker wind
Than even Lucretius dreamed, yet if one thought,
One gleam of law within the mind of man,
Lighten our darkness, there's a law beyond ;
And even that tempest of destruction moves
To a mightier music, shatters its myriad worlds
Only to gather them up, as a shattered wave
Is gathered again into a rhythmic sea,
Whose ebb and flow are but the pulse of Life,
In its creative passion.
The records grow
Unceasingly, and each new grain of truth
Is packed, like radium, with whole worlds of light.
The eclipses timed in Babylon help us now
To clock that gradual quickening of the moon,
Ten seconds in a century.
Who that wrote
On those clay tablets could foresee his gift
To future ages ; dreamed that the groping mind,
Dowered with so brief a life, could ever range
With that divine precision through the abyss ?

Who, when that good Dutch spectacle-maker set
Two lenses in a tube, to read the time
Upon the distant clock-tower of his church,
Could dream of this, our hundred-inch that shows
The snow upon the polar caps of Mars
Whitening and darkening as the seasons change?
Or who could dream when Galileo watched
His moons of Jupiter, that from their eclipses
And from that change in their appointed times,
Now late, now early, as the watching earth
Farther or nearer on its orbit rolled,
The immeasurable speed of light at last
Should be reduced to measure?
Could Newton dream
When, through his prism, he broke the pure white shaft
Into that rainbow band, how men should gather
And disentangle ray by delicate ray
The colours of the stars,—not only those
That burn in heaven, but those that long since perished,
Those vanished suns that eyes can still behold,
The strange lost stars whose light still reaches earth
Although they died ten thousand years ago.
Here, night by night, the innumerable heavens
Speak to an eye more sensitive than man's,
Write on the camera's delicate retina
A thousand messages, lines of dark and bright
That speak of elements unknown on earth.
How shall men doubt, who thus can read the Book
Of Judgment, and transcend both Space and Time,
Analyse worlds that long since passed away,
And scan the future, how shall they doubt His power
From whom their power and all creation came?"

I think that, when the second Herschel tried
Those great hexameters in our English tongue,

A nobler shield than ever Achilles knew
Shone through the song and made his echoes live :
" *There he depicted the earth, and the canopied sky, and the sea-waves,*
There the unwearied sun, and the full-orbed moon in their courses,
All the configured stars that gem the circuit of heaven,
Pleiads and Hyads were there and the giant force of Orion,
There the revolving Bear, which the Wain they call, was ensculptured,
Circling on high, and in all his courses regarding Orion,
Sole of the starry train that descends not to bathe in the ocean."

A nobler shield for us, a deeper sky ;
But even to us who know how far away
Those constellations burn, the wonder bides
That each vast sun can speed through the abyss
Age after age more swiftly than an eagle,
Each on its different road, alone like ours
With its own satellites ; yet, since Homer sang,
Their aspect has not altered ! All their flight
Has not yet changed the old pattern of the Wain.
The sword-belt of Orion is not sundered.
Nor has one fugitive splendour broken yet
From Cassiopeia's throne.
A thousand years
Are but as yesterday, even unto these.
How shall men doubt His empery over time
Whose dwelling is a deep so absolute
That we can only find Him in our souls.
For there, despite Copernicus, each may find
The centre of all things. There He lives and reigns.
There infinite distance into nearness grows,
And infinite majesty stoops to dust again ;
All things in little, infinite love in man . . .

Oh, beating wings, descend to earth once more,
And hear, reborn, the desert singer's cry:
When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The sun and the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained,
Though man be as dust, I know Thou art mindful of him;
And, through Thy law, Thy light still visiteth him.

PART II. THE BOOK OF EARTH

I

THE GRAND CANYON

LET the stars fade. Open the Book of Earth.

Out of the Painted Desert, in broad noon,
Walking through pine-clad bluffs, in an air like wine,
I came to the dreadful brink.

I saw, with a swimming brain, the solid earth
Splitting apart, into two hemispheres,
Cleft, as though by the axe of an angry god.

On the brink of the Grand Canyon,
Over that reeling gulf of amethyst shadows,
From the edge of one sundered hemisphere I looked down,
Down from abyss to abyss,
Into the dreadful heart of the old earth dreaming
Like a slaked furnace of her far beginnings,
The inhuman ages, alien as the moon,
Æons unborn, and the unimagined end.
There, on the terrible brink, against the sky,
I saw a black speck on a boulder jutting
Over a hundred forests that dropped and dropped
Down to a tangle of red precipitous gorges
That dropped again and dropped, endlessly down.

A mile away, or ten, on its jutting rock,
The black speck moved. In that dry diamond light

It seemed so near me that my hand could touch it.
It stirred like a midge, cleaning its wings in the sun.
All measure was lost. It broke—into five black dots.
I looked, through the glass, and saw that these were men.

Beyond them, round them, under them, swam the abyss
Endlessly on.
Far down, as a cloud sailed over,
A sun-shaft struck, between forests and sandstone cliffs,
Down, endlessly down, to the naked and dusky granite,
Crystalline granite that still seemed to glow
With smouldering colours of those buried fires
Which formed it, long ago, in earth's deep womb.
And there, so far below that not a sound,
Even in that desert air, rose from its bed,
I saw the thin green thread of the Colorado,
The dragon of rivers, dwarfed to a vein of jade,
The Colorado that, out of the Rocky Mountains,
For fifteen hundred miles of glory and thunder,
Rolls to the broad Pacific.
From Flaming Gorge,
Through the Grand Canyon with its monstrous chain
Of subject canyons, the green river flows,
Linking them all together in one vast gulch,
But christening it, at each earth-cleaving turn,
With names like pictures, for six hundred miles:
Black Canyon, where it rushes in opal foam;
Red Canyon, where it sleeks to jade again
And slides through quartz, three thousand feet below;
Split-Mountain Canyon, with its cotton-wood trees;
And, opening out of this, *Whirlpool Ravine*,
Where the wild rapids wash the gleaming walls
With rainbows, for nine miles of mist and fire;
Kingfisher Canyon, gorgeous as the plumes
Of its winged denizens, glistening with all hues;

Glen Canyon, where the Cave of Music rang
Long since, with the discoverers' desert-song;
Vermilion Cliffs, like sunset clouds congealed
To solid crags; the *Valley of Surprise*,
Where blind walls open, into a Titan pass;
Labyrinth Canyon, and the *Valley of Echoes*;
Cataract Canyon, rolling boulders down
In floods of emerald thunder; *Gunnison's Valley*
Crossed, once, by the forgotten Spanish Trail;
Then, for a hundred miles, *Desolation Canyon*,
Savagely pinnacled, strange as the lost road
Of Death, cleaving a long-deserted world;
Gray Canyon next; then *Marble Canyon*, stained
With iron-rust above, but brightly veined
As Parian, where the wave had sculptured it;
Then deep *Still-water*.
And all these conjunct
In one huge chasm, were but the towering gates
And dim approaches to the august abyss
That opened here,—one sempiternal page
Baring those awful hieroglyphs of stone,
Seven systems, and seven ages, darkly scrolled
In the deep Book of Earth.
Across the gulf
I looked to that vast coast opposed, whose crests
Of raw rough amethyst, over the Canyon, flamed,
A league away, or ten. No eye could tell.
All measure was lost. The tallest pine was a feather
Under my feet, in that ocean of violet gloom.
Then, with a dizzying brain, I saw below me,
A little way out, a tiny shape, like a gnat
Flying and spinning,—now like a gilded grain
Of dust in a shaft of light, now sharp and black
Over a blood-red sandstone precipice.
"Look!"

The Indian guide thrust out a lean dark hand
That hid a hundred forests, and pointed to it,
Muttering low, " Big Eagle ! "
All that day,
Riding along the brink, we found no end.
Still, on the right, the pageant of the Abyss
Unfolded. There gigantic walls of rock,
Sheer as the world's end, seemed to float in air
Over the hollow of space, and change their forms
Like soft blue wood-smoke, with each change of light.
Here massed red boulders, over the Angel Trail
Darkened to thunder, or like a sunset burned.
Here, while the mind reeled from the imagined plunge,
Tall amethystine towers, dark Matterhorns,
Rose out of shadowy nothingness to crown
Their mighty heads with morning.
Here, wild crags
Black and abrupt, over the swimming dimness
Of coloured mist, and under the moving clouds,
Themselves appeared to move, stately and slow
As the moon moves, with an invisible pace,
Or darkling planets quietly onward steal
Through their immense dominion.
There, far down,
A phantom sword, a search-beam of the sun,
Glanced upon purple pyramids, and set
One facet aflame in each, the rest in gloom ;
While from their own deep chasms of shadow, that seemed
Small inch-wide rings of darkness round them, rose
Tabular foothills, mesas, hard and bright,
Bevelled and flat, like gems ; or, softly bloomed
Like alabaster, stained with lucid wine ;
Then slowly changed, under the changing clouds,
Where the light sharpened, into monstrous tombs
Of trap-rock, hornblende, greenstone and basalt.

There,—under isles of pine, washed round with mist,
Dark isles that seemed to sail through heaven, and cliffs
That towered like Teneriffe,—far, far below,
Striving to link those huge dissolving steeps,
Gigantic causeways drowned or swam in vain,
Column on column, arch on broken arch,
Groping and winding, like the foundered spans
Of lost Atlantis, under the weltering deep.
For, over them, the abysmal tides of air,
Inconstant as the colours of the sea,
From amethyst into wreathing opal flowed,
Ebbed into rose through grey, then melted all
In universal amethyst again.
There, wild cathedrals, with light-splintering spires,
Shone like a dream in the Eternal mind
And changed as earth and sea and heaven must change.
Over them soared a promontory, black
As night, but in the deepening gulf beyond,
Far down in that vast hollow of violet air,
Winding between the huge Plutonian walls,
The semblance of a ruined city lay.
Dungeons flung wide, and palaces brought low,
Altars and temples, wrecked and overthrown,
Gigantic stairs that climbed into the light
And found no hope, and ended in the void:
It burned and darkened, a city of porphyry,
Paved with obsidian, walled with serpentine,
Beautiful, desolate, stricken as by strange gods
Who, long ago, from cloudy summits flung
Boulder on mountainous boulder of blood-red marl
Into a gulf so deep that, when they fell,
The soft wine-tinted mists closed over them
Like ocean, and the Indian heard no sound.

II

NIGHT AND THE ABYSS

A LONELY cabin, like an eagle's nest,
Lodged us that night upon the monstrous brink,
And roofed us from the burning desert stars;
But, on my couch of hemlock as I lay,
The Book of Earth still opened in my dreams.
Below me, only guessed by the slow sound
Of forests, through unfathomable gulfs
Of midnight, vaster, more mysterious now,
Breathed that invisible Presence of deep awe.
Through the wide open window, once, a moth
Beat its dark wings, and flew—out—over that,
Brave little fluttering atheist, unaware
Of aught beyond the reach of his antennæ,
Thinking his light quick thoughts; while, under him,
God opened His immeasurable Abyss.

All night I heard the insistent whisper rise:
One page of Earth's abysmal Book lies bare.
Read—in its awful hieroglyphs of stone—
His own deep scripture. Is its music sealed?
Or is the inscrutable secret growing clearer?
Then, like the night-wind, soughing through the pines,
Another voice replied, cold with despair:
It opens, and it opens. By what Power?
A silent river, hastening to the sea,
Age after age, through crumbling desert rocks
Clove the dread chasm. Wild snows that had their birth

In Ocean-mists, and folded their white wings
Among far mountains, fed that sharp-edged stream.
Ask Ocean whence it came. Ask Earth. Ask Heaven.
I see the manifold instruments as they move,
Remote or near, with intricate inter-play;
But that which moves them, and determines all,
Remains in darkness. Man must bow his head
Before the Inscrutable.

Then, far off, I heard,
As from a deeper gulf, the antiphonal voice:
It opens, and it opens, and it opens,—
The abyss of Heaven, the rock-leaved Book of Earth,
And that Abyss as dreadful and profound
Locked in each atom.

Under the high stars,
Man creeps, too infinitesimal to be scanned;
And, over all the worlds that dwindle away
Beyond the uttermost microscopic sight,
He towers—a god.

Midway, between the height
That crushes, and the depth that flatters him,
He stands within the little ring of light
He calls his knowledge. Its horizon-line,
The frontier of the dark, was narrow, once;
And he could bear it. But the light is growing;
The ring is widening; and, with each increase,
The frontiers of the night are widening, too.
They grow and grow. The very blaze of truth
That drives them back, enlarges the grim coasts
Of utter darkness.

Man must bow his head
Before the Inscrutable.

Then, from far within,
The insistent whisper rose:

Man is himself

The key to all he seeks.
He is not exiled from this majesty,
But is himself a part of it. To know
Himself, and read this Book of Earth aright,
Flooding it as his ancient poets, once,
Illumed old legends with their inborn fire,
Were to discover music that out-soars
His plodding thought, and all his fables, too;
A song of truth that deepens, not destroys
The ethereal realm of wonder; and still lures
The spirit of man on more adventurous quests
Into the wildest mystery of all,
The miracle of reality, which he shares.

But Oh, what art could guide me through that maze?
What kingly shade unlock the music sealed
In that dread volume?
Sons of an earlier age,
Poet and painter stretched no guiding hand.

Even the gaunt spirit, whom the Mantuan led
Through the dark chasms and fiery clefts of pain,
Could set a bound to his own realms of night,
Enwall them round, build his own stairs to heaven,
And slept now, prisoned, in his own coiling towers. . . .

Leonardo—found a shell among the hills,
A sea-shell, turned to stone, as at the gaze
Of his own cold Medusa. His dark eyes,
Hawk-swift to hunt the subtle lines of law
Through all the forms of beauty, on that wild height
Saw how the waves of a forgotten world
Had washed and sculptured every soaring crag,
Ere Italy was born. He stood alone,—
His rose-red cloak out-rippling on the breeze,—

A wondering sun-god. Through the mountain-peaks,
The rumour of a phantom ocean rolled.
It tossed a flying rainbow at his feet
And vanished. . . .
Milton—walked in Paradise.
He saw the golden compasses of God
Turning through darkness to create the world.
He saw the creatures of a thousand æons
Rise, in six days, out of the mire and clay,
Pawing for freedom. With the great blind power
Of his own song, he riveted one more clasp,
Though wrought of fabulous gold, on that dark Book,
Not to be loosed for centuries.
Nearer yet,
Goethe, the torch of science in his own hand,
Poet and seeker, pressed into the dark,
Caught one mysterious gleam from flower and leaf,
And one from man's own frame, of that which binds
All forms of life together. He turned aside
And lost it, saying, " I wait for light, more light."

And these all towered among celestial glories,
And wore their legends like prophetic robes ;
But who should teach me, in this deeper night,
The tale of this despised and wandering house,
Our lodge among the stars ; the song of Earth ;
Her birth in a mist of fire,—a ball of flame,
Slowly contracting, crusting, cracking and folding
Into deep valleys and mountains that still changed
And slowly rose and sank like age-long waves
On the dark ocean of ever-dissolving forms ;
Earth, a magical globe, an elfin sphere,
Quietly turning through boundlessness,
Budding with miracles, burgeoning into life ;
A murmuring forest of ferns, where the misty sun

Saw winged monsters fighting to bring forth men ;
Earth, and her savage youth, her monstrous lusts,
Mastered and curbed, till these, too, pulsed into music,
And became for man the fountain of his own power ;
Earth, on her shining way,
Coloured and warmed by the sun, and quietly spinning
Her towns and seas to shadow and light in turn ;
Earth, by what brooding Power
Endowed at birth with those dread potencies
Which out of her teeming womb at last brought forth
Creatures that loved and sinned, laughed, wept and prayed,
Died, and returned to the unknown Power that made them ;
Earth, and that tale of men, the kings of thought,
Who strove to read her secret in the rocks,
And turned, amid wild calumny and wrong,
The lucid sword-like search-beams of the mind
On the dark passion that through uncounted æons
Crept, fought, and climbed to the celestial gates,
Three gates in one, one heavenly gate in three,
Whose golden names are Beauty, Goodness, Truth.

Then, without sound, like an unspoken prayer,
The voice I heard upon the mountain height,
Out of a deeper gulf of midnight rose,
Within me, or without, invoking One
To whom this dust, not of itself, would pray :

Muse of the World, O terrible, beautiful Spirit,
Throned in pure light, since all the worlds obey
Thy golden law which, even here on earth,
Though followed blindly, leads to thy pure realm,
Couldst thou deliver me from this night at last,
Teach me the burning syllables of thy tongue
That I, even I, out of the mire and clay,
With face uplifted, and with arms upstretched

To the Eternal Sun of Truth, might raise
My song of adoration, not in vain.
Throned above Time, thou sawest when earth was born
In darkness, though none else was there to see;
For there was fury in the dark, and fire,
And power, and that creative pulse of thine,
The throb of music, the deep rhythmic throes
Of That which made and binds all worlds in one.

* * * * *

In the beginning, God made heaven and earth.
One sentence burned upon the formless dark—
One sentence, and no more, from that high realm.

The long-sought consummation of all law,
Through all this manifold universe, might shine clear
In those eight words one day; not yet; not yet!
They would be larger, then;
Not the glib prelude to a lifeless creed,
But wide as the unbounded realms of thought,
The last great simplification of them all,
The single formula, like an infinite sphere
Enfolding Space and Time, atoms and suns,
With all the wild fantastic hosts of life
And all their generations, through all worlds,
In one pure phrase of music, like a star
Seen in a distant sky.
I could not reach it.
All night I waited for the word in vain.

* * * * *

III

THE WINGS

NIGHT greyed, and up the immeasurable abyss,
Brimmed with a blacker night than ocean knew,
The dawn-wind, like a host of spirits, flowed,
Chanting those airy melodies which, long since,
The same wild breath, obeying the same law,
Taught the first pine-woods in the primal world.

We are the voices.
Could man only
Spell our tongue,
He might learn
The inscrutable secret
And grow young.

Young as we are
Who, on shores
Unknown to man,
Long, long since,
In waves and woods
Our song began.

Ere his footsteps
Printed earth,
Wild ferns and grass
Breathed it. No man
Heard that whispering
Spirit pass.

Not one mortal
Lay and listened
There was none
Even to hear
The sea-wave crumbling
In the sun.

None to hear
Our choral pine-woods
Chanting deep,
Even as now
Our solemn cadence
Haunts your sleep.

Ear was none
To heed or hear
When earth was young
Even now
Man understands not
Our strange tongue.

There came a clearer rustle of nearer boughs.
A bird cried, once, a sharp ecstatic cry
As if it saw an angel.
He stood there
Against the window's dusky square of sky,
Carrying the long curled crosier of a fern,
My singer of the woods, my Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
The invisible friend with whom I used to talk
In childhood, and that none but I could see,—
Shadow-of-a-Leaf, shy whisperer of the songs
That none could capture, and so few could hear;
A creature of the misty hills of home,
Quick as the thought that hides in the deep heart
When the loud world goes by; vivid to me

As flesh and blood, yet with an elfin strain
That set him free of earth, free to run wild
Through all the ethereal kingdoms of the mind,
His dark eyes fey with wonder at the world,
And that profoundest mystery of all,
The miracle of reality; clear, strange eyes,
Deep-sighted, joyous, touched with hidden tears.
Often he left me when I was not worthy;
And many a time I locked my heart against him,
Only to find him creeping in again
Like memory, or a wild vine through a window
When I most needed that still voice of his
Which never yet spoke louder than the breath
Of conscience in my soul. He would return
Quietly as the rustling of a bough
After the bird had flown; and, through a rift
Of evening sky, the shining eyes of a child,
The cold clear ripple of thrushes after rain,
The sound of a mountain-brook, or a breaking wave
Would teach my slumbering soul the ways of love.
He looked at me, more gently than of late,
And spoke (O, if this world had ears to hear
The sound of falling dew, the power that wrote
The Paradiso might recall that voice!)
It is near daybreak. I am faithful still;
And I am here to answer all your need.
The hills are old, but not so old as I;
The blackbird's eyes are young, but not so young
As mine that know the wonder of their sight.
Eagles have wings. Mine are too swift to see;
For while I stand and whisper at your side,
Time dwindles to a shadow. . . .
Like a mist
The world dissolved around us as he spoke.
I saw him standing dark against the sky.

I heard him, murmuring like a spirit in trance,—
Dawn on Crotona, dawn without a cloud. . . .

Then, slowly emerging from that mist of dreams,
As at an incantation, a lost world
Arose, and shone before me in the dawn.

II. THE GREEKS

I

PYTHAGORAS

I. The Golden Brotherhood

Dawn on Crotona, dawn without a cloud.

In the still garden that Pythagoras made,
The Temple of the Muses, firm as truth,
Lucid as beauty, the white marriage-song
Made visible, of beauty and truth in one,
Flushed with the deepening East.
It was no dream.
The thrush that with his long beak shook and beat
The dark striped snail-shell on the marble flags
Between the cool white columns told me this.
The birds among the silvery olives pealed
So many jargoning rivulet-throated bells
That in their golden clashings discord drowned,
And one wild harmony closed and crowned them all.
And yet, as if the spread wings of a hawk
Froze in the sky above them, every note
Died on an instant.
Over the sparkling grass
The long dark shadows of ash and pine began
To shrink, as though the rising of the sun
Menaced, not only shadows, but the world.

A frightened bird flew, crying, and scattering dew
Blindly away; though, on this dawn of dawns,

Nothing had changed. The Golden Brotherhood stole
Up through the drifts of wet rose-laurel bloom
As on so many a dawn for many a year,
To make their morning vows.
They thronged the porch,
The lean athletes of truth, trained body and mind,
For their immortal trial. Among them towered
Milon, the soldier-wrestler. His brown limbs
Moved with the panther's grace, the warrior's pride;
Milon, who in the Olympic contests won
Crown after crown, but wore them on broad brows
Cut like fine steel for thought; and, in his eyes,
Carried the light of those deep distances
That challenge the spirit of man.
They entered in;
And, like the very Muses following them,
Theano, and her Golden Sisterhood,
First of that chosen womanhood, by the grace
Of whose heaven-walking souls the race ascends,
Passed through the shining porch.
It was no dream.
In the bright marble, under the sandalled feet,
And in the glimmering columns as they passed,
The reflex of their flowing vestments glowed
White, violet, saffron, like another dawn.

* * * * *

Before them, through the temple's fragrant gloom,
The Muses, in their dim half-circle, towered;
And, in the midst, over the smouldering myrrh,
The form of Hestia.
In her mighty shadow,
Pythagoras, with a scroll in his right hand,
Arose and spoke.
"Our work is well-nigh done.

Our enemies are closing round us now.
I have given the sacred scrolls into the hands
Of Lysis; and, though all else be destroyed,
If but a Golden Verse or two live on
In other lands, and kindle other souls
To seek the law, our work is not in vain.
If it be death that comes to us, we shall lose
Nothing that could endure. It was not chance
That sent us on this pilgrimage through time,
But that which lives within us, the desire
Of gods, to know what once was dark in heaven.
Gods were not gods who, in eternal bliss,
Had never known this wonder—the deep joy
Of coming home. But we have purchased it,
And now return, enriched with memories
Of mortal love, terrestrial grief and pain,
Into our own lost realm."
His dark eyes flashed.
He lifted his proud head as one who heard
Strains of immortal music even now.
He towered among the Muses in the dusk,
And then, as though he, too, were carved in stone,
And all their voices breathed through his own voice,
"Fear nothing now," he said. "Our foes can steal
The burdens we lay down, but nothing more.
All that we are we keep. They strike at shadows
And cannot hurt us. Little as we may know,
We have learned at least to know the abiding Power
From these poor masks of clay. This dust, this flesh,
All that we see and touch, are shadows of it,
And hourly change and perish. Have we not seen
Cities and nations, all that is built of earth,
Fleeting into the darkness, like grey clouds,
And only one thing constant—the great law,
The eternal order of their march to death?

Have we not seen it written upon the hills?
The continents and seas do not endure.
They change their borders. Where the seas are now
Mountains will rise; and, where the land was, once,
The dark Atlantic ends the world for man.
But all these changes are not wrought by chance.
They follow a great order. It may be
That all things are repeated and reborn;
And, in their mighty periods, men return
And pass through their forgotten lives anew.
It may be; for, at times, the mind recalls—
Or half recalls—the turning of a road,
A statue on a hill, a passing face. . . .
It may be; for our universe is bound
In rhythm; and the setting star will rise.
This many a cunning ballad-singer knows
Who haunts the mind of man with dark refrains;
Or those deep poets who foretell in verse
The restoration of the world's great Year.
Time never fails. Not Tanais, or the Nile
Can flow for ever. They spring up and perish;
But, after many changes, it may be
These, too, return, with Egypt and her kings."

He paused a moment; then compassion, grief,
Wonder and triumph, like one music, spoke
Farewell to shadows, from his own deep soul
Rapt, in pure vision, above the vanishing world:

"The torrents drag the rocks into the sea.
The great sea smiles, and overflows the land.
It hollows out the valleys and returns.
The sea has washed the shining rocks away
And cleft the headland with its golden fields
That once bound Sicily to her mother's breast.

Pharos, that was an island, far from shore
When Homer sang, is wedded now and one
With Egypt. The wild height where Sappho stood,
The beautiful, white, immortal promontory,
Crowned with Apollo's temple, long ago
The struggling seas have severed from the land.
And those fair Grecian cities, Helice
And Buris, wondering fishermen see, far down,
With snowy walls and columns all aslant,
Trembling under the unremembering wave.
The waters of Anigris, that were sweet
As love, are bitter as death. There was a time
When Etna did not burn. A time will come
When it will cease to burn; for all things change;
And mightier things by far have changed than these
In the slow lapse of never-ending time.
I have seen an anchor on the naked hills,
And ocean-shells among the mountain-tops.
Continents, oceans, all things pass away;
But One, One only; for the Eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes, and can never change."

II. Death in the Temple

Night on Crotona, night without a star.
I heard the mob, outside the Temple, roaring
Death to Pythagoras! Death to those who know!

Before the flushed white columns, in the glare
Of all those angry torches, Cylon stood
Wickedly smiling. "They have barred the doors.
Pythagoras and his forty chosen souls
Are all within. They are trapped, and they shall die.
It will be best to whet the people's rage

Before we lay the axe, or set the torch
Against the Muses' temple. One wild howl
Of 'sacrilege' may defeat us."—This he called
"Faith in the people."
He moistened his dry lips,
And raised his hand. The savage clamouring ceased.
One breathless moment, ere he spoke, he paused,
Gathering his thoughts. His thin white weasel face
Narrowed, his eyes contracted. In their pain
—Pain pitiable, a torment of the mind—
A bitter memory burned, of how he sued
To join that golden brotherhood in vain.
For when the Master saw him, he discerned
A spirit in darkness, violent, empty of thought,
But full of shallow vanity, cunning lies,
Intense ambition.
All now was turned to hate;
Hate the destroyer of men, the wrecker of cities,
The last disease of nations; hate, the fire
That eats away the heart; hate, the lean rat
That gnaws the brain, till even reason glares
Like madness through blind eyes; hate, the thin snake
That coils like whip-cord round the victim's soul
And strangles it; hate, that slides up through his throat,
And with its flat and quivering head usurps
The function of his tongue,—to sting and sting,
Till all that poison which is now his life
Is drained, and he lies dead; hate, that still lives,
And for the power to strike and sting again,
May yet destroy this world.
So Cylon stood
Quivering a moment, in the fiery glare,
Over the multitude.
Then, in his right hand,
He shook a roll of parchment over his head,

Crying, *The Master said it!*
At that word,
A snarl, as of a myriad-throated beast,
Broke out again, and deepened into a roar—
Death to Pythagoras! Death to those who know!

Cylon upheld his hand, as if to bless
A stormy sea with calm. The howling died
Into a deadly hush. With twisted lips
He spoke.

"This is their Scroll, the Sacred Word,
The Secret Doctrine of their Golden Order!
Hear it!"
Then, interweaving truth with lies,
Till even the truth struck like a venomed dart
Into his hearers' minds, he read aloud
His cunningly chosen fragments.
At the end,
He tore the scroll, and trampled it underfoot.
"Ye have heard," he said. "Ye are kin to all the beasts!
And, when ye die, your souls again inhabit
Bodies of beasts, wild beasts, and beasts of burden.
Even yet more loathsome—he that will not starve
His flesh, and tame himself and all mankind
To bear this golden yoke shall, after death,
Dwell in the flesh of swine. He that rejects
This wisdom shall, hereafter, seek the light
Through endless years, with toads, asps, creeping things.
Thus would they exile all our happier gods!
Away with Bacchus and his feasts of joy!
Back, Aphrodite, to your shameful foam!
Men must be tamed, like beasts.
The Master said it!

And wherefore? There are certain lordly souls
Who rise above the beasts, and talk with gods.
These are his Golden Brotherhood; these must rule!
Ye heard that verse from Homer—whom he loves—
Homer, the sycophant, who could call a prince
'The shepherd of his people.' What are ye,
Even in this life, then, but their bleating flocks?
The Master said it!
Homer—his demi-god,
Ye know his kind; ye know whence Homer sprang;
An old blind beggarman, singing for his food,
Through every city in Greece"—(This Cylon called
Honouring the people)—"already he is out-worn,
Forgotten, without a word for this young age;
And great Pythagoras crowns him!
When they choose
Their Golden Brotherhood, they lay down their laws,
Declaring none may rule until he learn,
Prostrate himself in reverence to the dead,
And pass, through golden discipline, to power
Over himself and you; but—mark this well—
Under Pythagoras! Discipline! Ah, that path
Is narrow and difficult. Only three hundred souls,
Aristocrats of knowledge, have attained
This glory. It is against the people's will
To know, or to acknowledge those that know,
Or let their knowledge lead them for one hour.
For see—see how the gods have driven them mad,
Even in their knowledge! In their own Sacred Scroll,
Pythagoras, who derives you from the beasts,
Affirms that earth, this earth beneath our feet,
Spins like a little planet round the sun!"

A brutal bellowing, as of Asian bulls,
Boomed from a thousand mouths. (This Cylon called

The laughter of the people and their gods.)
He raised his hand. It ceased.
" *This* is their knowledge,
And *this*," he cried, " their charter to obscure
What all men know, the natural face of things.
This proves their right to rule us from above.
They meet here nightly. Nightly they conspire
Against your rights, your liberties, and mine.
Was it not they who, when the people rose
In Sybaris, housed her noble fugitives here ?
And was it not Pythagoras who refused
To send them back to Sybaris and their death ?
Was it not this that plunged us into war
With Sybaris ; and, when victory crowned our arms,
Who but Pythagoras robbed us of its fruits ?
We gathered booty, and he called it theft.
We burned their palaces, and he called it hate.
We avenged our sons. He called it butchery,
And said the wild beast wakes again in man.
What have we gained, then ? Nothing but the pride
Of saving those Pythagoras wished to save ;
Counting gold dross, and serving his pure gods.
The Master said it. What is your judgment, then ? "
He stretched one hand, appealing to the crowd,
And one to the white still Temple.
" *Death ! Death ! Death !* "
Under the flaring torches, the long waves
Of tense hot faces opened a thousand mouths,
Little blue pits of shadow that raced along them,
And shook the red smoke with one volleying roar,—
Death to Pythagoras ! Death to those who know !

But, in the Temple, through those massive walls,
While Cylon spoke, no whisper had been heard ;

Only, at times, a murmur, when he paused,
As of a ninth wave breaking, far away.

The half-moon of the Muses, crowned with calm,
Towered through the dimness. Under their giant knees,
In their immortal shadow, those who knew
How little was their knowledge waited death
Proudly, around their Master. Robed in white,
Beautiful as Apollo in old age,
He stood amongst them, laying a gentle hand,
One last caress, upon that dearest head
Bowed there before him, his own daughter's hair.
Then, tenderly, the god within him moved
His mortal lips; and, in the darkness there,
He spoke, as though the music of the spheres
Welled from his heart, to ease the hurts of death.

" Not tears, belovéd. Give it welcome, rather !
Soon, though they spared us, this blind flesh would fail.
They are saving us the weary mile or two
That end a dusty journey. The dull stains
Of travel; the soiled vesture; the sick heart
That hoped at every turning of the road
To see the Perfect City, and hoped in vain,
Shall grieve us now no more. Now, at the last,
After a stern novitiate, iron tests,
And grinding failures, the great light draws near,
And we shall pass together, through the Veil."
He bowed his head. It was their hour of prayer;
And, from among the Muses in the dark,
A woman's voice, a voice in ecstasy,
As if a wound should bless the sword that made it,
Breathed through the night the music of their law:

Close not thine eyes in sleep
Till thou hast searched thy memories of the day,

Graved in thy heart the vow thou didst not keep,
And called each wandering thought back to the way.

Pray to the gods! Their aid,
Their aid alone can crown thy work aright;
Teach thee that song whereof all worlds were made;
Rend the last veil, and feed thine eyes with light.

Nought shall deceive thee, then.
All creatures of the sea and earth and air,
The circling stars, the warring tribes of men
Shall make one harmony, and thy soul shall hear.

Out of this prison of clay
With lifted face, a mask of struggling fire,
With arms of flesh and bone stretched up to pray,
Dumb, thou shalt hear that Voice of thy desire.

Thou that wast brought so low;
And through those lower lives hast risen again,
Kin to the beasts, with power at last to know
Thine own proud banishment and diviner pain;

Courage, O conquering soul!
For all the boundless night that whelms thee now,
Though worlds on worlds into that darkness roll,
The gods abide; and of their race art thou!

There was a thunder of axes at the doors;
A glare as of a furnace; and the cry,
Death to Pythagoras! Death to those who know!

Then, over the streaming smoke and the wild light
That like a stormy sunset sank away
Into a darker night, the deeper mist
Rolled down, and of that death I knew no more.

II

ARISTOTLE

I. Youth and the Sea

The mists unfolded on a sparkling coast
Washed by a violet sea.
It was no dream.
The clustering irised bubbles in the foam,
The grinding stir as through the shining pebbles
The wave ran back; the little drifts of smoke
Where wet black rocks dried grey in the hot sun;
The pods of sea-weed, crackling underfoot,
All told me this.
My comrade at my side,
Moved like a shadow. I turned a promontory,
And like a memory of my own lost youth,
Shining and far, across the gulf I saw
Stagira, like a little city of snow,
Under the Thracian hills.
Nothing had changed.
I saw the City where that Greek was born
Who ranged all art, all life, and lit a fire
That shines yet, after twice a thousand years;
And strange, but strange as truth, it was to hear
No slightest change in that old rhythmic sound
Of waves against the shore.
Then, at my side,
My soul's companion whispered, all unseen,
'Two thousand years have hidden him from the world,
Robed him in grey and bearded him with eld,

Untrue to his warm life. There was a time
When he was young as truth is; and the sun
Browned his young body, danced in his young grey eyes;
And look—the time is now.'
There, as he spoke,
I saw among the rocks on my right hand,
Lying, face downward, over a deep rock-pool,
A youth, so still that, till a herring-gull swooped
And sheered away from him with a startled cry
And a wild flutter of its brown mottled wings,
I had not seen him.
Quietly we drew near,
As shadows may, unseen.
He pored intent
Upon a sea-anemone, like a flower
Opening its disk of blue and crimson rays
Under the lucid water.
He stretched his hand,
And, with a sea-gull's feather, touched its heart.
The bright disk shrank, and closed, as though a flower
Turned instantly to fruit, ripe, soft, and round
As the pursed lips of a sea-god hiding there.
They fastened, sucking, on the quill and held it.
Young Aristotle laughed. He rose to his feet.
" Come and see this ! " he called.
Under the cliff
Nicomachus arose, and drawing his robe
More closely round him, crossed the slippery rocks
To join his son.
There, side by side, they crouched
Over the limpid pool,—the grey physician
And eager boy.
" See, how it grips the feather !
And grips the rock, too. Yet it has no roots.
Your sea-flowers turn to animals with mouths.

Take out the quill. Now it turns back again
Into a flower; look—look—what lovely colours,
What marvellous artistry.
This never was formed
By chance. It has an aim beyond this pool.
What does it mean? This unity of design?
This delicate scale of life that seems to ascend
Without a break, through all the forms of earth
From plants to men? The sea-sponge that I found
Grew like a blind rock-rooted clump of moss
Dilating in water, shrinking in the sun;
I know it for a strange sea-animal now,
Shaped like the brain of a man. Can it be true
That, as the poets fable in their songs
Of Aphrodite, life itself was born
Here, in the sea?"
Nicomachus looked at him.
"That's a dark riddle, my son. You will not hear
An answer in the groves of Academe,
Not even from Plato. When you go to Athens
Next year, remember, among the loftiest flights
Of their philosophy, that the living truth
Is here on earth if we could only see it.
This, this at least, all true Asclepiads know.
Remember, always, in that battle of words,
The truth that father handed down to son
Through the long line of men that served their kind
From Æsculapius, father of us all,
To you his own descendant:—naught avails
In science, till the light you seize from heaven
Shines through the clear sharp fact beneath your feet.
This is the test of both—that, in their wedding,
The light that was a disembodied dream
Burns through the fact, and makes a lanthorn of it,
Transfigures it, confirms it, gives it new

And deeper meanings ; and itself, in turn,
Is thereby seen more truly.
Use your eyes ;
And you, or those that follow you, will outsoar
Pythagoras.
He believed the soul descends
From the pure realm of gods ; is clothed with clay ;
And, struggling upward through a myriad forms,
After a myriad lives and deaths, returns
Enriched with all those memories, lord of all
That knowledge, master of all those griefs and pains
As else it could not be, home to the gods,
Itself a god, prepared for the full bliss,
The living consummation of the whole.
Earth must be old, if all these things are true.
But take this tale and read it. If it seem
Only a tale, the light in it has turned
Dark facts to lanthorns for me. There are tales
More true than any fragment of the truth.

One of his homeless clan (who came to me
Dying), his last disciple's wandering son,
Gave me the scroll. I give it now to you,—
The young swift-footed runner with the fire.
You'll find strange thoughts ; and, woven into the close,
His Golden Verses, with a thought more strange."

Then, from his breast, the Asclepiad drew a scroll,
Smooth as old ivory, honey-stained by time,
A wand of whispering magic ; and the boy
Seized it with brown young hands.
His father smiled
And turned away, between the shining pools
To seek Stagira. Under his sandalled feet
The sea-weeds crackled. His footsteps crunched away

Along the beach.
Upon a sun-warmed rock
The boy outspread the curled papyrus-roll,
Keeping each corner in place with a small grey stone.
There, while the white robe drifting down the coast
Grew smaller and smaller, till at last it seemed
A flake of vanishing foam, he lay full length,
Reading the tale.
The salt on his brown skin
Dried to a faint white powder in the sun.
Over him, growing bold, the peering gulls
Wheeled closer, as he lay there, tranced and still;
Till, through the tale, the golden verses breathed
Like a returning music, rhythmic tones
Changed by new voices, coloured by new minds,
Yet speaking still for one time-conquering soul,
As on the shore the wandering ripples changed
And tossed new spray-drops into the sparkling air,
Yet pulsed with the ancient breathing of the sea:

Guard the immortal fire.
Honour the glorious line of the great dead.
To the new height let all thy soul aspire;
But let those memories be thy wine and bread.

Quench not in any shrine
The smouldering storax. In no human heart
Quench what love kindled. Faintly though it shine,
Not till it wholly dies the gods depart.

Truth has remembering eyes.
The wind-blown throng will clamour at Falsehood's gate.
Has Falsehood triumphed? Let the world despise
Thy constant mind. Stand thou aside, and wait.

Write not thy thoughts on snow.
Grave them in rock to front the thundering sky.
From Time's proud feast, when it is time to go,
Take the dark road; bid one more world good-bye.

The lie may steal an hour.
The truth has living roots, and they strike deep.
A moment's glory kills the rootless flower,
While the true stem is gathering strength in sleep.

Out of this earth, this dust,
Out of this flesh, this blood, this living tomb;
Out of these cosmic throes of wrath and lust,
Breaks the lost splendour from the world's blind womb.

Courage, O conquering soul!
For all the boundless night that whelms thee now,
Though suns and stars into oblivion roll,
The gods abide, and of their race art thou.

II. The Exile

Time dwindled to a shadow. The grey mist,
Wreathed with old legends, drifted slowly away
From the clear hill-top, where the invisible wings
Had brought me through the years.
It was no dream.
Clearly, as in a picture, at my feet,
Among dark groves, the columned temples gleamed,
And I saw Athens, in the sunset, dying.

Dying; for though her shrines had not yet lost
One radiant grain of what lies crumbling now
Like a god's bones upon the naked hills;

Though the whole city wound through gate on gate
Of visionary splendour to one height
Where, throned above this world, the Parthenon
Smiled at the thought of Time, her violet crown
Was woven of shadows from a darker realm,
And I saw Athens, dying.
From that hill—
The hill of Lycabettus—on our right
Eridanus flowed, Ilissus on the left,
Girdling the City like two coils of fire.
Then, as a spirit sees, I saw, unseen,
One standing near me on the bare hillside,
Still as a statue, gazing to the west;
So still that, till his lengthening shadow crept
Up to my feet, the wonder of the City
Withheld my gaze from something more august
In that one lonely presence.
Earth and sun,
On their great way, revealed him, with the touch
Of his long stealing shadow; yet it seemed
The power that cast it was no mortal power.
He towered against the dying gleams below
Like Truth in exile.
On him, too, at last
The doom had fallen. Clasping his grey robe
More closely round him, Aristotle looked
Long, long, at his proud City. She had lost
More glories in that sunset than she knew;
For, though the sun went down in kingly gold
To westward, on that darkening eastern hill,
The bearer of a more celestial fire
Now looked his last on Athens.
Changed, how changed,
Was this grey form from that immortal youth
Who read the Golden Verses by the sea.

His brow was furrowed now; and, on his face,
Life, with her sharp-edged tools of joy and pain,
Had deeply engraved a legend of her own.

There, as his lengthening shadow had drawn my gaze,
He seemed himself a shadow of vaster things,
A still dark portent of those moving worlds
Whose huge events, unseen and far away,
Had led him thither; and, as he once had shaped
Their course, now shaped his destiny and doom.

He had ranged all art, all science. He had shaped
Kingdoms and kings, by virtue of his part
In the one all-shaping Mind. Had he not lived,
The world that never knows its noblest powers
Had moved, with half mankind, another way.
There, looking backward, through his life, he knew
That, though the gods conceal their ways from men,
Yet in their great conjunctures there are gleams
That show them at their work. Theirs was the word,
Twenty years back, when Philip of Macedon
Summoned him, as the uncrowned king of thought,
To teach his eaglet how to use his wings.
For, by that thought, and by the disciplined power,
The sovran power of judgment, swift to seize
Causes, effects, and laws, and wield the blind
Unreasoning mass, he had wellnigh brought to birth
What Plato saw in vision—a State enthroned
Above the flux of time, Hellas at one,
A harmony of cities, each a chord
In an immortal song of Beauty and Truth,
Freedom and Law. His was the moving power,
Not wholly aware, that strove to an end unseen;
And in that power had Alexander reigned.
Autocrator of the Greek hegemony,

He had rolled all Asia back into the night.
Satraps of Persia, the proud kings of Tyre,
Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, all bowed down;
And Alexander shaped the conquered world,
But Aristotle shaped the conqueror's mind.
He had shaped that mind to ends not all its own.
His was the well-thumbed Odyssey that reposed
Under the conqueror's pillow; his the love,
Fragrant with memories of the hills and sea,
That had rebuilt Stagira; his the voice
In the night-watches; his the harnessed thoughts
That, like immortal sentries, mounted guard
In the dark gates of that world-quelling mind.
His was the whisper, the dark vanishing hint,
The clue to the riddle of slowly emerging life,
That, imaged in Egyptian granite, rose
Before the silent conqueror when he stared
At that strange shape, half human and half brute,
The Sphinx, who knew the secret of the world
And smiled at him, and all his victories,
Under the desert stars, while the deep night
Silently deepened round him.
Far away,
In Athens, towered the bearer of the fire.
His was the secret harmony of law
That, while the squadrons wheeled in ordered ranks,
Each finding its full life only in the whole,
Flashed light upon the cosmos; his the quest
That taught the conqueror how to honour truth
And led him, while he watered his proud steeds
In all the streams from Danube to the Nile,
To send another army through the wilds,
Ten thousand huntsmen, ranging hills and woods
At Aristotle's hest, for birds and beasts;
So that the master-intellect might lay hold

Upon the ladder of life that mounts through Time,
From plants to beasts, and up, through man, to God.
So all the might of Macedon had been turned
To serve the truth, and to complete his work
At Athens, for the conquering age to come;
When Athens, like the very City of Truth,
Might shine upon all nations, and might wear,
On her clear brows, his glory as her own.

Then came a flying rumour through the night.
Earth's overlord, the autocrator, his friend,
Alexander the Great had fallen in Babylon.
A little cup of poison, subtle drops
Of Lethe—in a cup of delicate gold,—
And the world's victor slept, an iron sleep;
The conqueror, stricken in his conquered city,
Cold, in the purple of Babylon, lay dead:
And the slow tread of his armies as they passed,
Soldier by soldier, through that chamber of death,
To look their last upon his marble face,
Pulsed like a muffled drum across the world.
Had Aristotle's cunning mixed the draught
That murdered tyranny? Let that whispered lie
Estrange the heart of Macedon.
There, in Athens,
It was enough, now that his friend lay dead,
To know that, as the body is rent away
From the immortal soul, his greatness now
Had lost its earthly stay. His mighty mind
Walked like a ghost in Athens. It was enough
To hint that he had taught his king too well;
Served him too well; and played the spy for him;
While, for main charge, since he had greatly loved
The mother who had borne him, since he had poured
His love out on her tomb, it would suffice

To snarl that rites like these were meant for gods
And that this man who had seen behind the world
The Mover of all things, the eternal God,
The supreme Good, by these fond rites of love,
Too simple and too great, too clear, too deep,
Had robbed the little sophists of their dues
And so blasphemed against their gods of clay.

* * * * *

Hurrying footsteps neared. He turned and saw
His young adopted son and Tyrtamus.
" Nicanor ! Theophrastus !—nay, lift up
Your heads. You cannot bring me bitterer news
Than I foresaw. I must be brought to judgment.
But on what grounds ? "—
" Dear father of us all—
The youth, Nicanor, answered, " When the crowd
Grins in the very face of those who ask,
Or think, or dream that truth should be their guide ;
Nay, grins at truth itself, as at a fool
Tricked in his grandsire's rags, a rustic oaf,
A blundering country simpleton who gapes
At the great city's reeling dance of lies,
How can the grounds be wanting ? "
" The true grounds,"
His ' Theophrastus ' muttered, " we know too well.
Eurymedon, and the rest, those gnat-like clans,
The sophists' buzzing swarms, desire a change.
They hold with Heraclitus—all things change."
His irony stung the youth. His grey eyes gleamed.
His voice grew harsh with anger. " Ay, all things change !
So justice and injustice, right and wrong,
Evil and good, must wear each other's cloaks ;
And, in that chaos, when all excellence
And honour are plucked down, and the clear truth
Trampled into the dirt, themselves may rise.

Athens is dying."
" They speak truly enough
Of all that they can know," the master said.
" Change is the rhythm that draws this world along.
They see the change. Its law they cannot see.
But man who is mortal in this body of earth
Has also a part, by virtue of his reason,
In an enduring realm. Their prophet knew
And heard what sophists have no souls to hear,—
The Harmony that includes the pulse of change ;
The divine Reason, past the flux of things ;
The eternal Logos, ordering the whole world."
And, as he spoke, I heard, through his own words,
Tones that were now a part of his own mind,
The murmur of that old legend which he read
So long ago, in boyhood, by the sea.
Time never fails. Not Tanais or the Nile
Can flow for ever. All things pass away
But One, One only ; for the eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes, and can never change.

Tyrtamus touched his arm. " Time presses now.
Come with us. All is ready. On the coast,
In a lonely creek, the quiet keel is rocking.
Three trusty sailors wait us, and at dawn
We, too, shall find new life in a new world
With all that could endure. The voyager knows
The blindness of the cities. Each believes
Its narrow wall the boundary of the world ;
And when he puts to sea, their buzzing cries
Fade out behind him like a wrangle of bees."—

" If I remain, what then ? "—
The hill-top shone
In the last rays. Athens was growing dark.

Tyrtamus answered him. " A colder cup
Of hemlock, and the fate of Socrates."
The Master looked at Athens. Far away
He traced the glimmering aisle of olive-trees
Where, for so long, with many a youthful friend
He had walked, and taught, and striven himself to learn.
Southward, below the Acropolis, he could see
The shadowy precincts of the Asclepiads,
Guarding their sacred spring, the natural fount,
Loved for his father's memory.
Close beside,
The Dionysiac theatre, like a moon
Hewn from the marble of Hymettus, gleamed,
A silvery crescent, dying into a cloud.
There, though the shade of Sophocles had fled,
Long since, he heard even now in his deep soul
The stately chorus on a ghostly stage
Chanting the praise of thought that builds the city,
Hoists the strong sail to cross the hoary sea,
Ploughs the unwearied earth, yokes the wild steed
And the untamed mountain-bull; thought that contrives
Devices that can cure all ills but death:
Of all strong things none is more strong than man;
Man that has learned to shield himself from cold
And the sharp rain; and turns his marvellous arts
Awhile to evil; and yet again, to good;
Man that is made all-glorious with his city
When he obeys the inviolable laws
Of earth and heaven; but when, in subtle pride,
He makes a friend of wrong, is driven astray
And broken apart, like dust before the wind.

All now, except the heights had died away
Into the dark. Only the Parthenon raised
A brow like drifted snow against the west.

He watched it, melting into the flood of night
With all those memories.
Then he turned and said,
" If in a moment's thoughtless greed I grasped
The prize that Athens offers me to-night,
She is not so rich but this might make her poor.
Death wears a gentle smile when we grow old ;
And I could welcome it. But she shall not stain
Her hands a second time. Let Athens know
That Aristotle left her, not to save
His last few lingering days of life on earth
But to save Athens.
I have truly loved her,
Next to the sea-washed town where I was born,
Best of all cities built by men on earth.
But there's another Athens, pure and white,
Where Plato walks, a City invisible,
Whereof this Athens is only a dim shadow ;
And I shall not be exiled from that City."

The hill-top darkened. The blind mist rolled down ;
The voices died. I saw and heard no more.

III. MOVING EASTWARD

I

FARABI AND AVICENNA

Grey mists enfolded Europe ; and I heard
Sounds of bewildered warfare in the gloom.

Yet, like a misty star, one lampad moved
Eastward, beyond the mountains where of old
Prometheus, in whose hand the fire first shone,
Was chained in agony. His undying ghost
Beheld the fire returning on its course
Unquenched, and smiled from his dark crag in peace,
Implacable peace, at heaven.
Eastward, the fire
Followed the road Pythagoras trod, to meet
The great new morning.
The grey mists dissolved.
And was it I—or Shadow-of-a-Leaf—that saw
And heard, and lived through all he showed me then ?

I saw a desert blazing in the sun,
Tufts of tall palm ; and then—that City of dreams.
As though an age went past me in an hour
I saw the silken Khalifs and their court
Flowing like orient clouds along the streets
Of Bagdad. In great Mahmoun's train I saw
Nazzam, who from the Stagirite caught his fire.
Long had he pondered on the Eternal Power
Who, in the dark palm of His timeless hand

Rolls the whole cosmos like one gleaming pearl.
Had he not made, in one pure timeless thought,
All things at once, the last things with the first,
The first life with the last; so that mankind,
Through all its generations, co-exists
For His eternal eyes? Yet, from our own
Who in the time-sphere move, the Maker hides
The full revolving glory, and unfolds
The glimmering miracles of its loveliness
Each at its destined moment, one by one,
In an æonian pageant that returns
For ever to the night whence it began.
Thus Nazzam bowed before the inscrutable Power,
Yet found Him in his own time-conquering soul.

I saw the hundred scribes of El Mansour
Making their radiant versions from the Greek.
I saw Farabi, moving through the throng
Like a gaunt chieftain. His world-ranging eyes
Beheld the Cause of causes.
In his mind,
Lucid and deep, the reasoning of the Greeks
Flooded the world with new celestial light,
Golden interpretations that made clear
To mighty shades the thing they strove to say.

He carried on their fire, with five-score books
In Arabic, where the thoughts of Athens, fledged
With orient colours, towered to the pure realm
Of Plato; but, returning earthward still,
Would wheel around his Aristotle's mind
Like doves around the cote where they were born.
Then the dark mists that round the vision flowed
Like incense-clouds, dividing scene from scene,
Rolled back from a wide prospect, and I saw,

As one that mounts upon an eagle's wing,
A savage range of mountains, peaked with snow,
To northward.
They glowed faintly, for the day
Was ending, and the shadows of the rocks
Were stretched out to the very feet of night.
Yet, far away, to southward, I could see
The swollen Oxus, like a vanishing snake
That slid away in slippery streaks and gleams
Through his grey reed-beds to the setting sun.
Earthward we moved; and, in the tawny plain,
Before me, like a lanthorn of dark fire
Bokhara shone, a city of shadowy towers
Crimsoned with sunset. In its turreted walls
I saw eleven gates, and all were closed
Against the onrushing night.
Then, at my side,
My soul's companion whispered, "You shall see
The Gates of Knowledge opening here anew.
Here Avicenna dwelt in his first youth."

At once, as on the very wings of night,
We entered. In the rustling musky gloom
Of those hot streets, thousands of falcon eyes
Were round us; but our shadows passed unseen
Into the glimmering palace of the Prince
Whom Avicenna, when all others failed,
Restored to life, and claimed for all reward
Freedom to use the Sultan's library,
The pride of El Mansour; a wasted joy
To the new Sultan. Radiances were there
Imprisoned like the innumerable slaves
Of one too wealthy even to know their names;
Beautiful Grecian captives, bought with gold
From tawny traffickers in the Ionian sea.

A shadow, with a shadow at my side,
I saw him reading there, intent and still,
Under a silver lamp; his dusky brow
Wreathed with white silk, a goblet close at hand
Brimmed with a subtle wine that could uncloud
The closing eyes of Sleep.
Along each wall
Great carven chests of fragrant cedar-wood
Released the imprisoned magic,—radiant scrolls,
Inscribed with wisdom's earliest wonder-cry;
Dark lore; the secrets of the Asclepiads;
History wild as legend; legends true
As history, all being shadows of one light;
Philosophies of earth and heaven; and rhymes
That murmured still of their celestial springs.
He thrust his book aside, as in despair.
Our shadows followed him through the swarming streets
Into the glimmering mosque. I saw him bowed
Prostrate in prayer for light, light on a page
Of subtle-minded Greek which many a day
Had baffled him, when he sought therein the mind
Of his forerunner.
I saw him as he rose;
And, as by chance, at the outer gates he met
A wandering vendor of old tattered books
Who, for three dirhems, offered him a prize.
He bought it, out of gentle heart, and found
A wonder on every page,—Farabi's work,
Flooding his Greek with light.
He could not see
What intricate law had swept it into his hand;
But, having more than knowledge, he returned
Through the dark gates of prayer; and, pouring out
His alms upon the poor, lifted his heart
In silent thanks to God.

II

AVICENNA'S DREAM

But all these books—for him—were living thoughts,
Clues to the darker Book of Nature's law;
For, when he climbed, a goat-foot boy, in Spring
Up through the savage Hissar range, he saw
A hundred gorges thundering at his feet
With snow-fed cataracts; torrents whose fierce flight
Uprooted forests, tore great boulders down,
Ground the huge rocks together; and every year
Channelled raw gullies and swept old scars away;
So that the wildered eagle beating up
To seek his last year's eyry, found that all
Was new and strange; and even the tuft of pines
That used to guide him to his last year's nest
Had vanished from the crags he knew no more.

There, pondering on the changes of the world,
Young Avicenna, with a kinglier eye,
Saw in the lapse of ages the great hills
Melting away like waves; and, from the sea,
New lands arising; and the whole dark earth
Dissolving, and reshaping all its realms
Around him, like a dream.
Thus of his hills
And of their high snows flowing through his thoughts
Was born the tale that afterwards was told
By golden-tongued Kazwini, and wafted thence
Through many lands, from Tartary to Pameer.

For, cross-legged, in the shadow of a palm,
The hawk-eyed teller of tales, in years unborn
Holding his wild clan spell-bound, would intone
The deep melodious legend, flowing thus,
As all the world flows, through the eternal mind.

I came one day upon an ancient City.
I saw the long white crescent of its wall
Stained with thin peach-blood, blistered by the sun.

I saw beyond it, clustering in the sky,
Ethereal throngs of ivory minarets,
Tall slender towers, each crowned with one bright pearl.

It was no desert phantom; for it grew
And sharpened as I neared it, till I saw,
Under the slim carved windows in the towers,
The clean-cut shadows, forked and black and small
Like clinging swallows.
In the midst up-swam
The Sultan's palace with its faint blue domes,
The moons of morning.
Wreaths of frankincense
Floated around me as I entered in.
A thousand thousand warrior faces thronged
The glimmering streets. Blood-rubies burned like stars
In shadowy silks and turbans of all hues.

The markets glowed with costly merchandise.
I saw proud stallions, pacing to and fro
Before the rulers of a hundred kings.
I saw, unrolled beneath the slender feet
Of slave-girls, white as April's breathing snow,
Soft prayer-rugs of a subtler drift of bloom

Than flows with sunset over the blue and grey
And opal of the drifting desert sand.

Princes and thieves, philosophers and fools
Jostled together, among hot scents of musk.
Dark eyes were flashing. Blood throbbed darker yet.
Lean dusky fingers groped for hilts of jade.
Then, with a roll of drums, through Eastern gates,
Out of the dawn, and softer than its clouds,
Tall camels, long tumultuous caravans,
Like stately ships came slowly stepping in,
Loaded with shining plunder from Cathay.
I turned and asked my neighbour in the throng
Who built that city, and how long ago.
He stared at me in wonder. " It is old,
Older than any memory," he replied.
" Nor can our fathers' oldest legend tell
Who built so great a city."
I went my way.
And in a thousand ages I returned,
And found not even a stone of that great City,
Not even a shadow of all that lust and pride.
But only an old peasant gathering herbs
Where once it stood, upon the naked plain.

" What wars destroyed it, and how long ago ? "
I asked him. Slowly lifting his grey head,
He stared at me in wonder.
" This bleak land
Was always thus. Our bread was always black
And our wine harsh. It is a bitter wind
That scourges us. But where these nettles grew
Nettles have always grown. Nothing has changed
In mortal memory here."
" Was there not, once,

A mighty City ?" I said, " with shining streets,
Here, on this ground ?" I spoke with bated breath.
He shook his head and smiled, the pitying smile
That wise men use to poets and to fools.—
" Our fathers never told us of that City.
Doubtless it was a dream."
I went my way.
And in a thousand ages I returned ;
And, where the plain was, I beheld the sea.
The sea-gulls mewed and pounced upon their prey.
The brown-legged fishermen crouched upon the shore,
Mending their tarry nets.
I asked how long
That country had been drowned beneath the waves.
They mocked at me. " His wits are drowned in wine.
Tides ebb and flow, and fishes leap ashore ;
But all our harvest, since the first wind blew,
Swam in deep waters. Are not wrecks washed up
With coins that none can use, because they bear
The blind old images of forgotten kings ?
The waves have shaped these cliffs, dug out these caves,
Rounded each agate on this battered beach.
How long ? Ask earth, ask heaven. Nothing has changed.
The sea was always here."—
I went my way.

And in a thousand ages I returned.
The sea had vanished. Where the ships had sailed
Warm vineyards basked, among the enfolding hills.
I saw, below me, on the winding road,
Two milk-white oxen, under a wooden yoke,
Drawing a waggon, loaded black with grapes.
Beside them walked a slim brown-ankled girl.
I stood beneath a shadowy wayside oak
To watch them. They drew near.

It was no dream.
Blood of the grape upon the wrinkled throats
And smoking flanks of the oxen told me this.
I saw the branching veins and satin skin
Twitch at the flickering touch of a fly. I saw
The knobs of brass that sheathed their curling horns,
The moist black muzzles.
Like many whose coats are white,
Their big dark eyes had mists of blue.
Their breath
Was meadows newly mown.
By all the gods
That ever wrung man's heart out in the grave
I did not dream this life into the world.—
Blood of the grape upon the girl's brown arms
And lean, young, bird-like fingers told me this.
Her smooth feet powdered by the warm grey dust;
The grape-stalk that she held in her white teeth;
Her mouth a redder rose than Omar knew;
Her eyes, dark pools where stars could shine by day;
These were no dream. And yet,—
"How long ago,"
I asked her, "did the bitter sea withdraw
Its foam from all your happy sun-burnt hills?"
She looked at me in fear. Then, with a smile,
She answered, "Nothing here has ever changed.
My father's father, in his childhood, played
Among these vines. That oak-tree where you stand
Had lived a century, then. The parent oak
From which its acorn dropped had long been dead.
But hills are hills. I never saw the sea.
Nothing has ever changed."
I went my way.
Last, in a thousand ages I returned,
And found, once more, a City, thronged and tall,

More rich, more marvellous even than the first;
A City of pride and lust and gold and grime,
A City of clustering domes and stately towers,
And temples where the great new gods might dwell.
But, turning to a citizen in the gates,
I asked who built it and how long ago.
He stared at me as wise men stare at fools;
Then, pitying the afflicted, he replied
Gently, as to a child:
"The City is old,
Older than all our histories. Its birth
Is lost among the impenetrable mists
That shroud the most remote antiquity.
None knows, nor can our oldest legends tell
Who built so great a City."
I went my way.

IV. THE TORCH IN ITALY

LEONARDO DA VINCI

I

HILLS AND THE SEA

THE mists rolled back. I saw the City of Flowers
Far down, upon the plain; and, on the slope
Beside us—we were shadows and unseen,—
Giulio, the painter, sketching rocks and trees.
We watched him working, till a pine-cone crackled
On the dark ridge beyond us, and we saw,
Descending from the summits like a god,
A deep-eyed stranger with a rose-red cloak
Fluttering against the blue of the distant hills.

He stood awhile, above a raw ravine,
Studying the furrows that the rains had made
Last winter. Then he searched among the rocks
As though for buried gold.
As he drew near
Giulio looked up and spoke, and he replied.
Their voices rose upon the mountain air
Like a deep river answering a brook,
While each pursued his work in his own way.

Giulio

What are you seeking? Something you have lost?

The Stranger

Something I hope to find.

Giulio

You dropped it here?
Was it of value? Not your purse, I hope.

The Stranger

More precious than my purse.

Giulio

Your lady's ring?
A jewel, perhaps?

The Stranger

A jewel of a sort;
But it may take a thousand years to trace it
Back to its rightful owner.

Giulio (*laughing*)

O, you are bitten
By the prevailing fashion. Since the plough
Upturned those broken statues, all the world
Is relic-hunting; but, my friend, you'll find
No Aphrodite here.

The Stranger (*picking up a fossil*)

And yet I think
It was the sea, from which she rose alive,
That shaped these rocks and left these twisted shells
Locked up, like stone in stone. They must have lived
Once, in the sea.

Giulio

Ah, now I understand.
You're a philosopher,—one of those who tread
The dusty road to Nowhere, which they call
Science.

The Stranger

All roads to truth are one to me.

Giulio

Sir, you deceive yourself. Your road can lead
Only to error. The Adriatic lies
How many miles away? We stand up here
On these unchanging hills; and yet, to fit
Your theory, you would roll the seas above
The peaks of Monte Rosa.

The Stranger

But these shells?
How did they come here?

Giulio

Obviously enough,
The sea being where it is, it was the Flood
That left them here.

The Stranger

Then Noah must have dropped them
Out of his Ark. They never crept so far;
And Noah must have dumped his ballast, too,
Among our hills; for all those rippled rocks
Up yonder were composed of blue sea-clay.
I have found sea-weed in them, turned to stone,
The claws of crabs, the skeletons of fish.

Think you that, if your Adriatic lay
Where it now lies, its little sidling crabs
Could scuttle through the Deluge to the hills?
Your Deluge must have risen above the tops
Of all the mountains. If it rose so high,
Then it embraced the globe, and made our earth
One smooth blue round of water. When it sank
What chasm received those monstrous cataracts?
Or was the sun so hot it sucked them up
And turned them into a mist?
Is not that tale
A racial memory, lingering in our blood,
Of realms that now lie buried in the sea,
Or isles that heaved up shining from the deep
In old volcanic throes?

Giulio

I must confess
I always feel a pang, sir, when I see
A man of talent wasting his fine powers
On this blind road.

The Stranger

Show me a better way.

Giulio

The way of Art, sir.

The Stranger

Yes. That is a road
I have wished that I might travel. But are you sure
Our paths are not eventually the same?
Why have you climbed up here? To paint the truth,
As you perceive it, in those rocks and trees.
Suppose that, with your skill of hand, you saw
The truth more clearly, saw the lines of growth,

The bones and structure of the world you paint,
And the great rhythm of law that runs through all,
Might you not paint them better even than now?
Might you not even approach the final cause
Of all our art and science,—the pure truth
Which also is pure beauty?

Giulio

Genius leaps
Like lightning to that mark, sir, and can waive
These pains and labours.

The Stranger

Oh, I have no doubt
That you are right. I speak with diffidence,
And as a mere spectator; one who likes
To know, and seizes on this happy chance
Of learning what an artist really thinks.

Giulio

We artists, sir, are not concerned with laws,
Except to break them. Genius is a law
Unto itself.

The Stranger

And that is why you've made
Your wood-smoke blue against that shining cloud?
Against the darker background of the hill
It is blue in nature also; but it turns
To grey against the sky.

Giulio

I am not concerned
With trivial points.

The Stranger

But if they point to truth
Beyond themselves, and through that change of colour
Reveal its cause, and knit your scheme in law;
Nay, as a single point of light will speak
To seamen of the land that they desire,
Transfiguring all the darkness with one spark,
Would this be trivial? Sir, a touch will do it.
Lend me your brush a moment. Had you drawn
Your rocks here in the foreground, thus and thus,
Following the ribbed lines of those beds of clay
As the sea laid them, and the fire upheaved
And cracked them, you'll forgive me if I say
That they'd not only indicate the law
Of their creation; but they'd look like rocks
Instead of——

Giulio

Pray don't hesitate.

The Stranger

I speak
As a spectator only; but to me—
Sponges or clouds perhaps——

Giulio

We artists, sir,
Aim at this very effect. To us, the fact
Is nothing. There is a kingdom of the mind,
Where all things turn to dreams. Nothing is true
In that great kingdom; and our subtlest work
Is that which has no basis.

The Stranger

Then I fear
My thoughts are all astray; for I believed
That kingdom to be more substantial far
Than anything we see; and that the road
Into that kingdom is the road of law
Which we discover here,—the Word made Flesh.

Giulio

I do not understand you—quite. I fear
Yours is the popular view—that art requires
Purposes, meanings, even moralities
With which we artists, sir, are not concerned.

The Stranger

Oh, no. I merely inquire. I wish to hear
From one who knows. I am a little puzzled.
You have dismissed so much—this outer world
And all its laws; and now this other, too.
I am no moralist; but I must confess
That, in the greatest Art, I have always found
A certain probity, a certain splendour
Of inner and outer constancy to law.

Giulio

All genius is capricious. You'll admit
That men who lived like beasts have painted well.

The Stranger

Yes; but not greatly, except when their own souls
Have gripped the beast within them by the throat,
And risen again to reassert the law.

Giulio

Art lives by its technique, a fact the herd
Will never understand. A noble soul
Is useless, if it cannot wield a brush.

The Stranger

May not technique include control and judgment?
Alone, they are not enough; but, for the heights,
More is required, not less. I'd even add
Some factors you despise.

Giulio

Your shells, for instance?
And that mysterious and invisible sea?

The Stranger

The sea whence Beauty rose.

Giulio

You have an eye
For Beauty, too. You are a lover of art
And you are rich. What opportunities
You throw away! Was it not you I saw
Yesterday, in the market-place at Florence,
Buying caged birds and tossing them into the air?

The Stranger

It may have been. I like to see them fly.
The structure of the wing,—I think that men
Will fly one day.

Giulio

It was not pity, then ?

The Stranger

I'd not exclude it. As I said before,
I would include much.

Giulio

You were speaking, sir,
Of Art. There are so few, so very few
Who understand what Art is.

The Stranger

Fewer still
Who know the few to choose.

Giulio

Perhaps you'd care
To see some work of mine. I do not live
In Florence ; but I'd like to set your feet
On the right way. We are a little group
Known to the few that know. You'd find our works
Far better worth your buying than caged birds.
Pray let me know your name, sir.

The Stranger

Leonardo.

II

AT FLORENCE

I SAW the house at Florence, cool and white
With violet shadows, drowsing in the sun.
The fountain splashed and bubbled in the court.
Beside it, in a space of softened light,
Under a linen awning, ten feet high,
Roofing a half-enclosure, where three walls
Were tinted to a pine-wood's blue-black shade,
I saw a woman seated on a throne,
And Leonardo, with his radiant eyes,
Glancing from his wet canvas to her face.

Her face was filled with music. Music swelled
Above them, from a gallery out of sight;
And as the soft pulsation of the strings
Died into infinite distances, he spoke.
His voice was more than music. It was thought
Ebbing and flowing, like a strange dark sea.

"Listen to me; for I have things to say
That I can only tell the world through you.
Were you not just a little afraid of me
At first? You know by popular report
I dabble in Black Arts, and so I would
To keep you here, an hour or two each day,
Until the mystery we have conjured up
Between us—there again, it came and went—
Smiles at the centuries in their masquerade
As you smiled, then, at me.

Not mockery—quite—
Not irony either; something we evoked
That seems to have caught the ironist off his guard,
And slyly observes the mocker's naked heel.
So we'll defend humanity, you and I,
Against the worst of tyrannies,—the blind sneer
Of intellectual pride. The subtle fool
And cunning sham at least shall meet one gaze
More subtle, more secure; not yours or mine,
But Nature's own—that calm, inscrutable smile
Whereby each erring atomy is restored
To its true place, taught its true worth at last,
And heaven's divine simplicity renewed.

Not yours or mine, Madonna. Could I trust
To brush and palette or my skill of hand
For this? Oh, no! We need Black Arts, I think,
Black Arts and incantations, or you'd grow
Weary of sitting here.
Last night I made
Five bubbles of glass—you blow them with a pipe
Over a flame,—and set them there to dance
Upon the fountain's feathery crest of spray.
Piero thought it waste of time. He jeers
At these mechanical arts of mine. I watched
That dance and learned a little of the machine
We call the world. I left them leaping there
To catch your eyes this morning, and learned more.
So one thing leads to another. A device,
Mechanical as the spinning of the stars
In the Arch-Mechanic's Cosmos, woke a gleam
Of wonder; and I lay these Black Arts bare
To make you wonder more.
Black Arts, Madonna;
For even such trifles may discover depths

Dark as the pit of death; as when I laid
Dice on a drum, and by their trembling showed
Where underneath our armoured city walls
The enemy dug his mines.
And now—you smile,
To think how wars are won.
Catgut and wood
Have served our wizardry. Yes; that's why I set
Musicians in the gallery overhead,
To pluck their strings; and, while you listened, so
Painted the living spirit that they bound
With their bright spells before me, in your face.

Black Arts, Madonna, and cold-blooded, too.
Oh, sheer mechanical, playing upon your mind
And senses, as they too were instruments,
Or colours to be ground and mixed and used
For purposes that were not yours at all,
Until the living Power that uses me
Breathes on this fabric, also made by hands,
The inscrutable face that smiles all arts away.

How many tales I have told you sitting here
To make you see, according to my need,
The comedy of the world, its lights and shades:
The sensual feast; the mockery of renown;
Youth and his innocent boastings, unaware
How swiftly run the sands; Youth that believes
His own bright scorn for others' aching faults
Has crowned him conqueror; Youth so nobly sure
That plans are all achievements; quite, quite sure
Of his own victory where all others failed;
Age, with blind eyes, or staring at defeat,
Dishonoured; Age, in honour, with a wreath
Of fading leaves in one old trembling hand,

And at his feet the dark all-gulfing grave ;
Envy, the lean and wizened witch behind him,
Riding on death, like his own crooked shadow,
Snapping at heaven with one contemptuous hand,
As though she hated God ; and, on her face,
A mask of fairness ; Envy, with those barbs
Of wicked lightning darting from her flesh ;
Envy, whose eyes the palm and olive wound ;
Whose ears the laurel and myrtle pierce with pain ;
A fiery serpent eating at her heart ;
A quiver on her back with tongues for arrows.
Each of these pictures left its little shadow,
A little memory in your spellbound face,
And so your picture smiles at all of these,
And at one secret never breathed aloud,
Because I think we knew it all too well.

Once only, in a riddle, I made you smile
At our own secret also, when I said
' If liberty be dear to you, Madonna,
Never discover that your painter's face
Is Love's dark prison.'
Sailing to the south
From our Cilicia, you and I have seen
Beautiful Cyprus, rising from the wave ;
Cyprus, that island where Queen Venus reigned.
The blood of men was drawn to that rough coast
As tides, on other shores, obey the moon.
Glens of wild dittany, winding through the hills
From Paphos, her lost harbour, to the peak
Of old Olympus, where she tamed the gods,
Enticed how many a wanderer.
Odorous winds
Welcomed us, ruffling, crumpling the smooth brine
Into a sea of violets. We drew near.

We heard the muffled thunder of the surf !
What ships, what fleets had broken among those rocks !
We saw a dreadful host of shattered hulls,
Great splintered masts, innumerable keels
With naked ribs, like skeletons of whales
All weltering there, half-buried in the sand.
The foam rushed through them. On their rotted prows
And weed-grown poops the sea-gulls perched and screamed ;
And all around them with an eerie cry
An icy wind was blowing.
It would seem
Like the Last Judgment, should there ever be
A resurrection of the ships we saw
Lying there dead. These things we saw and live.
And now your picture smiles at all of these.
The secret still evades me everywhere ;
And everywhere I feel it, close at hand.
Do you remember when Vesuvius flamed
And the earth shivered and cracked beneath our feet ?
Ten villages were engulfed. I wandered out
Among the smoking fragments of earth's crust
To see if, in that breaking-up of things,
Nature herself had now perhaps unsealed
Some of her hidden wonders.
On that day,
I found a monstrous cavern in the hills,
A rift so black and terrible that it dazed me.
I stood there, with my back bent to an arch,
My left hand clutching at my knee, my right
Shading contracted eyes. I strained to see
Into that blackness, till the strong desire
To know what marvellous thing might lurk within
Conquered my fear. I took a ball of thread
And tied one end to a lightning-blasted tree.
I made myself a torch of resinous pine

And entered, running the thread through my left hand,
On, on, into the entrails of the world.

Oh, not Odysseus, when his halting steps
Crept through that monstrous hollow to the dead,
Felt such a fearful loneliness as I;
For there were voices echoing through *his* night,
And shadows of lost friends to welcome him;
But my fierce road to knowledge clove its way
Into a silence deeper than the grave,
Into a darkness where not even a ghost
Could stretch its hands out, even in farewell.
And all that I could see around me there
Was my own smoking torchlight, walls of rock
And awful rifts where other caverns yawned.
And all that I could hear was my own steps
Echoing through endless darkness, on and on.

My thread ran out. My torch was burning low,
When, through the darkness, I became aware
Of something darker, looming up in front;
Solid as rock, and yet more strange and wild
Than any shadow. My flesh and blood turned cold
Before that awful Presence in the dark.
I left the thread behind me, and crept on;
Held up the guttering torch; and there, O there,
I saw it, and I live.
A monstrous thing
With jaws that might have crushed a ship, and bones
That might upheave a mountain; a Minotaur,
A dreadful god of beasts, now turned to stone,
Like a great smoke-bleared idol. The wild light
Smeared it with blood; a thing that once had lived;
A thing that once might turn the sea to mist

With its huge flounderings, and would make a spoil
For kingdoms with the ships it drove ashore.
The torchlight flared against it, and went out;
And I groped back, in darkness. . . .
And you smile.
Oh, what a marvel of enginery was there!
What giant thews and sinews once controlled
The enormous hinges of the rock-bound bones
I saw in my dark cavern. Yet it perished,
And all its monstrous race has perished, too.
Was it all waste? Did it prepare the way
For lordlier races? Even, perhaps, for men?

Only one life to track these wonders home,
So many roads to follow. Never the light
Till all be travelled.
We will not despise
Mechanical arts, Madonna, while we use
These marvellous living instruments of ours.
Rather we'll seek to master for ourselves
The Master's own devices. Birds can fly,
And so shall men, when they have learned the law
Revealed in every wing. Far off, I have seen
Men flying like eagles over the highest clouds;
Men that in ships like long grey swordfish glide
Under the sea; men that in distant lands
Will speak to men in Italy; men that bring
The distant near, and bind all worlds in one.
And yet—I shall not see it. I have explored
This human instrument, traced its delicate tree
Of nerves, discovering how the life-blood flows
Out of the heart, through every branching vein;
And how, in age, the thickening arteries close
And the red streams no longer feed this frame,
And the parched body starves at last and dies.

I have built bridges. Armies tread them now.
The rains will come. The torrents will roll down
And sweep them headlong to the sea, one day.
I have painted pictures. Let cicalas chirrup
Of their brief immortality. I know
How soon these colours fade.
And yet, and yet,
I do not think the Master of us all
Would set us in His outer courts at night
As the Magnificent, once, in the flush of wine,
Set Angelo, to flatter an idle whim
And sculpture him a godhead out of snow.

The work's not wasted. In my youth I thought
That I was learning how to live, and now
I see that I was learning how to die.
Then comes the crowning wonder. We strip off
The scaffolding; for the law is learned at last;
And our reality, Parian then, not snow,
Dares the full sun of morning, fronts the gaze
Of its divine Pygmalion; lives and breathes;
And knows, then, why it passed through all those pains.

Now—the last touch of all! And, as this face
Begins to breathe against those ancient rocks,
Let music breathe these arts of mine away."

Music awoke. It throbbed like hidden wings
Above them. Then a minstrel's golden voice,
As from a distance, on those wings arose
And poured the Master's passion into song:

Burn, Phœnix, burn;
And, in thy burning, take
All that love taught me, all I strove to learn,
All that I made, and all I failed to make.

If it be true
That from the fire thou rise
In splendour, as men say dead worlds renew
Their light from their own embers in the skies,

In thy fierce nest
I'd share that death with thee,
To make one shining feather on thy breast
Of all I am, and all I strove to be.

The worthless bough
May kindle a rich coal;
And in our mingling ashes, how wilt thou
Know mine from thine, ere both reclothe thy soul?

Now—as thy wings
Arise from this proud fire,
My dust in thy assumption mounts and sings;
And, being a part of thee, I still aspire.

V. IN FRANCE

JEAN GUETTARD

I

THE ROCK OF THE GOOD VIRGIN

WHO knows the name of Jean Guettard to-day?
I wrestled with oblivion all night long.
At times a curtain on a lighted stage
Would lift a moment, and fall back again.
Once, in the dark, a sunlit row of vines
Gleamed through grey mists on his invisible hill.
The mists rolled down. Then, like a miser, Night
Caught the brief glory in her blind cloak anew.
At dawn I heard the voice of Shadow-of-a-Leaf
Breathing a quiet song. It seemed remote
And yet was near, as when the listener's heart
Fills a cold shell with its remembered waves.

" When I was young," said Jean Guettard,
" My comrades and myself would hide
Beneath a tall and shadowy Rock
In summer, on the mountain-side.
The wind and rain had sculptured it—
Such tricks the rain and wind will play,—
To likeness of a Mother and Child;
But wind and rain," said Jean Guettard,
" Have worn the rocks for many a day."

" The peasants in that quiet valley,
 Among their vineyards bending there,
Called it the Rock of the Good Virgin,
 And breathed it many an evening prayer.
When I grew up I left my home
 For dark Auvergne, to seek and know
How all this wondrous world was made ;
 And I have learned," said Jean Guettard,
" How rains can beat, and winds can blow."

" When I came home," said Jean Guettard,
 " Not fifty years had fleeted by.
I looked to see the Form I loved
 With arms outstretched against the sky.
Flesh and blood as a wraith might go.
 This, at least, was enduring stone.
I lifted heart and eyes aglow,
 Over the vines," said Jean Guettard. . . .

" The rain had beaten, the wind had blown,
 The hill was bare as the sky that day.
Mother and Child from the height had gone.
 The wind and rain," said Jean Guettard,
" Had crumbled even the Rock away."

" Shadow-of-a-Leaf," I whispered, for I saw
The crosier of a fern against the grey ;
And, as the voice died, he stood dark before me.
" You sang as though you loved him. Let the mists
Unfold."
 He smiled. " See, first, that Rock," he said,
" Dividing them."
 At once, through drifting wreaths
I saw a hill emerging, a green hill
Clothed with the dying rainbow of those tears

The mist had left there. From the rugged crest
Slowly the last thin veils dissolved away.
I saw the Rock upstanding on the height
So closely, and so near me, that I knew
Its kinship with the rocks of Fontainebleau ;
The sandstone whose red grains for many an age
Had been laid down, under a vanished sea ;
A Rock, upthrust from darkness into light,
By buried powers, as power upthrust it now
In the strong soul, with those remembering hills,
Till, graven by frost and beaten by wind and rain,
It slowly assumed the semblance of that Form
Of Love, the Mother, holding in her arms
The Child of Earth and Heaven ; a shape of stone ;
An image ; but it was not made by hands.

Footsteps drew near. I heard an eager voice
Naming a flower in Latin.
Up they came—
Each with a bunch of wild flowers in his hand,—
A lean old man, with snowy wind-blown hair,
Panting a little ; and, lightly at his side,
Offering a strong young arm, a sun-burnt boy,
Of eighteen years, with darkly shining eyes.
It was those eyes, deep, scornful, tender, gay,
Dark fires at which all falsehood must consume,
That told me who they were—the young Guettard,
And his old grandsire.
Under the Rock they stood.
" Good-bye. I'll leave you here," the old man said.
" We've had good luck. These are fine specimens.
The last, perhaps, that we shall find together ;
For when you leave your home to-morrow, Jean,
I think you are going on a longer journey
Even than you know. Perhaps, when you are famous,

You will not be so proud as I should be,
Were I still living, to recall the days
When even I, the old apothecary,
Could teach you something."
Jean caught a wrinkled hand,
Held it between his own, and laughed away
That shadow, but old Descurain looked at him,
Proudly and sadly. "It will not rest with you,
Or your affection, Jean. The world will see to it.
The world that knows as much of you and me,
As you and I of how that creeper grew
Around your bedroom window."
As he spoke,
Along the lower slopes the mists began
To blow away like smoke. The patch of vines
Crept out again; and, far below, I saw,
Sparkling with sun, the valley of the Juine,
The shining river, and the small clear town
Étampes, the grey old church, the clustering roofs,
The cobbled square, the gardens, wet and bright
With blots of colour.
"I have lived my life
Out of the world, down there," Descurain said,
"Compounding simples out of herbs and flowers;
Reading my Virgil in the quiet evenings,
Alone, for all those years; and, then, with you.
O fortunatos—Do we ever know
Our happiness till we lose it? You'll remember
Those Georgics—the great praise of Science, Jean!
And that immortal picture of the bees!
No doubt you have chosen rightly. For myself,
I know, at least, where healing dittany grows,
And where earth's beauty hides in its dark heart
An anodyne, at last, for all our pain.
And one thing more I have learned, and see with awe

On every side, more clearly, that on earth
There's not one stone, one leaf, one creeping thing,
No; nor one act or thought, but plays its part
In the universal drama.
You'll look back
One day on this lost bee-like life of mine;
And find, perhaps, in its obscurest hour
And lowliest task, the moment when a light
Began to dawn upon a child's dark mind.
The old pestle and mortar, and the shining jars,
The smell of the grey bunches of dried herbs,
The little bedroom over the market-square,
The thrifty little house where you were born,
The life that all earth's great ones would despise—
All these, perhaps, were needed, as the hand
That led you, first, in childhood to the hills.
You'll see strange links, threads of effect and cause,
In complicated patterns, growing clear
And binding all these memories, each to each,
And all in one; how one thing led to another,
My simples to your love of plants and flowers,
And this to your new interest in the haunts
That please them best—the kinds of earth, the rocks,
And minerals that determine where they grow,
Foster them, or reject them. You'll discover
That all these indirections are not ruled
By chance, but by dark predetermined laws.
You'll grope to find what Power, what Thought, what Will,
Determined them; till, after many a year,
At one swift clue, one new-found link, one touch,
They are flooded with a new transfiguring light,
Deep as the light our kneeling peasants know
When, dumbly, at the ringing of a bell
They adore the sacred elements; a light
That shows all Nature, of which your life is part,

Bound to that harmony which alone sets free;
And every grain of dust upon its way
As punctual to its purpose as a star.

This Rock has played its part in many a life.
We know it, for we see it every day.
No angelus ever rang, but someone's eyes
Were lifted to it; and, returning home,
The wanderer strains to see it from the road.
What is it, then? It plays no greater part
Than any grain of dust beneath our feet,
Could we discern it. A dumb block of stone,
A shadow in the mind, a thought of God,
A little fragment of the eternal order,
That postulates the whole.
If we could see
The universal Temple in which it stands
We, too, should bow our heads; for if this Form
Were shaped by Chance, it was the selfsame Chance
That gave us love and death. In this the fool
Descries a reason for denying all
To which our peasants kneel. The years to come
(And you will speed them, Jean) will rather make
This dust the floor of heaven."
The old man laid
His bunch of herbs and flowers below the Rock,
Smiled, nodded, and went his way.
"Was it by chance,"
Thought Jean Guettard, "that grandad laid them so;
Or by design; or by some vaster art
Transcending, yet including, all our thoughts,
And memories, with those flowers and that dumb stone,
As chords in its world-music? Why should flowers
Laid thus"—he laid his own at the feet of the Rock—
"Transfigure it with such beauty that it stood

Blessing him, from its arch of soft blue sky
Above him, like a Figure in a shrine?"

He touched its glistening grains. "I think that Ray
Was right," he murmured. "This was surely made
Under the sea; sifted and drifted down
From vanished hills and spread in level beds,
Under deep waters; compressed by the sea's weight;
Upheaved again by fire; and now, once more,
Wears down by way of the rain and brook and river,
Back to the sea; but all by roads of law."
Then, looking round him furtively, to make sure
No one was near, he dropped upon his knees.
The mist closed over him. Rock and hill were lost
In greyness once again.

II

MALESHERBES AND THE BLACK MILESTONES

Moments were years,
Till, at the quiet whisper of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Those veils withdrew, and showed another scene.
I saw two dusty travellers, blithely walking
With staffs and knapsacks, on a straight white road
Lined with tall sentinel poplars as to await
A king's return; but scarce a bird took heed
Of those two travel-stained wanderers—Jean Guettard
And Malesherbes, his old school-friend.
Larks might see
Two wingless dots that crept along the road.
The Duke rode by and saw two vagabonds
With keenly searching eyes, as they jogged on
To Moulins. Birds and Duke and horse could see,
Against the sky, that old square prison-tower,
The tall cathedral, the dark gabled roofs,
Thronging together behind its moated wall;
But not one eye in all that wide green land
Saw what those two could see; and not one soul
Espied the pilgrim thought upon its way
To change the world for man.
The pilgrim thought!
Say rather the swift hunter, tracking down
More subtly than an Indian the dark spoor
Of his gigantic prey.
I saw them halt
Where, at the white road's edge, a milestone rose

Out of the long grass, like a strange black gnome,
A gnome that had been dragged from his dark cave
Under the mountains, and now stood there dumb,
Striving to speak. But what?
"There! There! Again!"
Cried Jean Guettard. They stood and stared at it,
But not to read as other travellers use
How far themselves must journey.
They knelt down
And looked at it, and felt it with their hands.
A farmer passed, and wondered were they mad.
For, when they hailed him, and his tongue prepared
To talk of that short cut across the fields
Beside the mill-stream, they desired to know
Whence the black milestone came. It was the fourth
That they had passed since noon.
He grinned at them.
"Black stones?" he said, "you'll find them all the way
To Volvic now!"
"To Volvic," cried Guettard,
"Volcani vicus!"
They seized their staffs again;
Halted at Moulins, only to break a crust
Of bread and cheese, and drink one bottle of wine,
Then hastened on, following the giant trail,
Milestone by milestone, till the scent grew hot;
For now they saw, in the wayside cottages,
The black stone under the jasmine's clustering stars;
And children, at the half-doors, wondered why
Those two strange travellers pushed the leaves away
And tapped upon their walls.
At last they saw,
Black as a thundercloud anchored to its hill,
Above the golden orchards of Limagne,

The town of Riom. All its walls were black.
Its turreted heights with leering gargoyles crawled
Above them, like that fortress of old Night
To which Childe Roland came.
No slughorn's note
Challenged it, and they set no lance in rest,
But dusty and lame, with strangely burning eyes,
Those footpads, quietly as the ancient Word,
Stole into that dark lair and sought their prey.
Surely, they thought, the secret must be known
To some that live, eat, sleep, in this grim den.
Have they not guessed what monster lurks behind
This blackness?
In the chattering streets they saw
The throng around the fruit-stalls, and the priest
Entering the Sainte Chapelle. With eyes of stone
The statue of that lover of liberty
The chancellor, L'Hôpital, from his great dark throne
Gazed, and saw less than the indifferent sparrow
That perched upon his hand. Barefooted boys
Ran shouting round the fountain in the square.
It was no dream. Along the cobbled street,
Clattering like ponies in their wooden shoes,
Three girls went by with baskets full of apples.
The princely butcher, standing at his door,
Rosily breathing sawdust and fresh blood,
Sleeked his moustache and rolled an amorous eye.
It was no dream. They lived their light-winged lives
In this prodigious fabric of black stone,
Slept between walls of lava, drank their wine
In taverns whose black walls had risen in fire;
Prayed on the slag of the furnace; roofed their tombs
With slabs of that slaked wrath; and saw no more
Than any flock of birds that nightly roost
On the still quivering Etna.

It was late,
Ere the two travellers found a wise old host
Who knew the quarries where that stone was hewn;
Too far for them that night. His inn could lodge them.
A young roast fowl? Also he had a wine,
The Duc de Berry, once. . . . Enough! they supped
And talked. Gods, how they talked and questioned him,—
The strangest guests his inn had ever seen.
They wished to know the shape of all the hills
Around those quarries. "There were many," he said,
"Shaped at the top like this." He lifted up
An old round-bellied wine-cup.
At the word
He wellnigh lost his guests. They leapt to their feet.
They wished to pay their quittance and press on
To see those hills. But, while they raved, the fowl
Was laid before them, luscious, fragrant, brown.
He pointed, speechless, to the gathering dusk,
And poured their wine, and conquered.
"The Bon Dieu
Who made the sensual part of man be praised,"
He said to his wife; "for if He had made a world
Of pure philosophers, every tavern in France
Might close its shutters, and take down its sign."

So Jean Guettard and Malesherbes stayed and supped;
And, ere they slept, being restless, they went out
And rambled through the sombre streets again.
They passed that haunted palace of Auvergne,
Brooding on its wild memories and grim birth;
And from the Sainte Chapelle, uplifting all
That monstrous darkness in one lean black spire
To heaven, they heard an organ muttering low
As though the stones once more were stirred to life
By the deep soul within. Then, arched and tall,

In the sheer blackness of that lava, shone
One rich stained window, where the Mother stood,
In gold and blue and crimson, with the Child.
They looked at it as men who see the life
And light of heaven through the Plutonian walls
Of this material universe. They heard
The young-voiced choir, in silver-throated peals,
Filling the night with ecstasy. They stood
Bareheaded in the dark deserted street,
Outcasts from all that innocence within,
And silent; till the last celestial cry,
Like one great flight of angels, ebbed away.

III

THE SHADOW OF PASCAL

At daybreak they pressed on. Strange hills arose
Clustering before them, hills whose fragrant turf,
Softer than velvet, hid what savage hearts !
At noon they saw, beside the road, a gash
Rending the sunlit skin of that green peace ;
An old abandoned quarry, half overgrown
With ferns, and masked by boughs.
They left the road
And looked at it. Volcanic rock ! A flood
Of frozen lava !
They marked its glossy blackness, the rough cords
And wrinkles where, as the fiery waves congealed,
It had crept on a little ; and strangely there
New beauty, like the smile on truth's hard face,
Gleamed on them. Never did bracken and hart's tongue fern
Whisper a tale like those whose dauntless roots
Were creviced in that grim rock. They tracked it up
Through heather and thyme. They saw what human eyes
Had seen for ages, yet had never seen,—
The tall green hill, a great truncated cone,
Robed in wild summer and haunted by the bee,
But shaped like grey engravings that they knew
Of Etna and Vesuvius.
Near its crest
They saw the sunlight on a shepherd's crook,
Bright as a star. A flock of nibbling sheep
Flowed round it like a cloud, a rambling cloud

With drifting edges that broke and formed again
Before one small black barking speck that flew
Swift as a bird about a cloud in heaven.
Thyme underfoot, wild honey in the thyme ;
But, under the thyme and honey, if eyes could see,
In every runnel and crevice and slip and patch,
A powdery rubble of pumice, black and red,
Flakes of cooled lava and stones congealed from fire.
It was no dream. A butterfly spread its fans
White, veined with green, on a rock of sunlit slag,
Slag of the seething furnaces below.
They reached the summit ; and, under them, beheld
The hollow cup, the crater, whence that flood
Out of the dreadful molten heart of the earth
Poured in red fury to create Auvergne.
But now, instead of smoke and fire, they saw
Red of the heather in that deep grassy hollow,
And heard, instead of the hissing of the abyss,
The small grey locust, stridulant in the sun.
They came to Clermont. All its dark old streets
Were built of lava. By the *Place de Jaude*,
O, strangely in their own swift race for truth,
They met the phantom of an earlier fire !
They found the house where Pascal first beheld
The sunlight, through a window in lava-stone ;
And many a time had passed, a brooding child,
With all his deep celestial thoughts to come,
Through that volcanic porch, but never saw
The wonder of the walls wherein he slept.
They saw, through mists, as I through mists discerned
Their own strange drama, that scene within the scene.
They climbed the very hill that Pascal made
A beacon-height of truth—the Puy de Dôme,
Where Florin Périer, at his bidding, took
His tubes of soft quicksilver ; and, at the base,

And, at the summit, tested, proved, and weighed
The pressure of that lovely body of light,
Our globe-engirdling air. On one swift hint,
One flash of truth that Torricelli caught
From Galileo, and Pascal caught in turn,
He weighed that glory.
Ever the drama grew.
The vital fire, in yet more intricate ways
(As life itself, enkindling point by point
In the dark formless embryo, grows to power),
Coursed on, from mind to mind, each working out
Its separate purpose, yet all linked in one.
For those two pilgrims, on the cone-shaped hill
That Pascal knew, and yet had never known,
Met his great spirit among the scoriac flakes,
And found themselves, in vision, on that pure height
Where all the paths to truth shall one day meet.
They met his brooding spirit as they climbed.
They passed the dead man's words from mouth to mouth,
With new significance, deeper and more strange
Even than they knew. " *We are on fire to explore*
The universe, and build our tower of truth
Into the Infinite. Then the firm earth laughs,
Opens, under its cracked walls, an abyss."—
Lavoisier! Malesherbes! Friends of Jean Guettard.
Was it only the whisper of Shadow-of-a-Leaf that showed me
Gleams of the Terror approaching, a wild storm
Of fiercer, hell-hot lava, and that far sound
Of tumbrils. . . . The Republic has no need
Of savants!
This dream went by, with the dead man's words.
They reached the highest crest. Before their eyes
The hill-scape opened like a mighty vision
That, quietly, has come true.

They stood there, dumb,
To see what they foresaw, the invisible thought
Grown firm as granite ; for, as a man might die
In faith, yet wake amazed in his new world,
They saw those chains of dead volcanoes rise,
Cone behind cone, with green truncated crowns,
And smokeless craters, on the dazzling blue.
There, in the very sunlit heart of France,
They saw what human eyes had daily seen
Yet never seen till now. They stood and gazed,
More lonely in that loneliness of thought
Than wingéd men, alighting on the moon.

Old as the moon's own craters were those hills ;
And all their wrath had cooled so long ago
That as the explorers on their downward path
Passed by a cup-shaped crater, smooth and green,
Three hundred feet in depth and breadth, they saw,
Within it, an old shepherd and his flock
Quietly wandering over its gentle slopes
Of short sweet grass, through clumps of saffron-broom.
They asked him by what name that hill was known.
He answered, *The Hen's Nest !*
" Hen's Nest," cried Jean Guettard, " the good God grant
This fowl be not a phœnix and renew
Its feathers in Auvergne."
They chuckled aloud,
And left the shepherd wondering, many a day,
What secret knowledge in the stranger's eye
Cast that uncanny light upon the hill,
A moment, and no more ; and yet enough
To make him feel, even when the north wind blew,
Less at his ease in that green windless cup ;
And, once or twice, although he knew not why,
He turned, and drove his flock another way.

IV

AT PARIS

" FEW know the name of Jean Guettard to-day,"
Said Shadow-of-a-Leaf; for now the mists concealed
All that clear vision. " I often visited him,
Between the lights, in after years. He lived
Alone at Paris then, in two lean rooms,
A sad old prisoner, at the Palais Royal;
And many a time, beside a dying fire,
We talked together. I was only a shadow,
A creature flickering on the fire-lit wall;
But, while he bowed his head upon his hands
And gazed into the flame with misted eyes,
I could steal nearer and whisper time away.
And sometimes he would breathe his thoughts aloud;
And when at night his faithful servant, Claire,
Stole into the room to lay his frugal meal,
She'd glance at him with big brown troubled eyes
To find him talking to himself alone.

And sometimes when the masters of the hour
Won easy victories in the light world's fashion,
With fables, easily spun in light quick minds,
He'd leave the Academy thundering its applause,
And there, in his bare room, with none to see
But Shadow-of-a-Leaf, he would unfold again
—Smiling a little grimly to himself—
Those curious beautiful tinted maps he drew,
The very first that any man had made

To show, beneath the kingdoms made by man,
The truth, that hidden structure, ribbed with rock,
And track the vanished ages by the lives
And deaths imprinted there.
They had made him rich
In nothing but the truth.
He had mapped the rocks.
" The time is not yet come," he used to say,
" When we can clothe them with a radiant Spring
Of happy meanings. I have never made
A theory. That's for happier men to come ;
It will be time to answer the great riddle
When we have read the question.
Here and there
Already, I note, they use this work of mine
And shuffle the old forerunner out of sight.
No matter. Let the truth live. I shall watch
Its progress, proudly, from the outer dark ;
More happily, I believe, thus free from self,
Than if my soul went whoring after fame.
One thing alone I'll claim. It is not good
To let all lies go dancing by on flowers.
This—what's his name ?—who claims to be the first
To find a dead volcano in Auvergne,
And sees, in that, only an easy road
To glory for himself, shall find, ere long,
One live volcano in old Jean Guettard.
The fool has forced me to it ; for he thinks
That I'll claim nothing. I prefer my peace ;
But truth compels me here. I'll set my heel
On him, at least. Malesherbes will bear me out.
As for the rest—no theory of the earth
Can live without these rock-ribbed facts of mine,
The facts that I first mapped, I claim no more.
These rocks, these bones, these fossil ferns and shells,

Of which the grinning moon-calf makes a jest,
A byword for all dotage and decay,
Shall yet be touched with beauty, and reveal
The secrets of the book of earth to man."

" He made no theory," whispered Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
" And yet, I think, he looked on all these things
Devoutly ; on a sea-shell turned to stone
As on a sacred relic, at whose touch
Time opened like a gate, and let him pass
Out of this mocking and ephemeral world
Through the eternal ages, home to God."

And so I watched him, growing old and grey,
In seeking truth ; a man with enemies,
Ten enemies for every truth he told ;
And friends that still, despite his caustic tongue,
Loved him for his true heart.
Yet even these
Never quite reached it ; never quite discerned
That even his gruffest words were but the pledge
Of his own passionate truth ; the harsh pained cry
For truth, for truth, of one who saw the throng
Bewildered and astray, the ways of love
Grown tortuous, and the path to heaven grown dim
Through man's unheed for truth.
I saw him greet
Condorcet, at the Academy. " We have lost
Two members. I condole with you, my friend.
It is their last *éloges* you'll speak to-day !
How will you bury their false theories ?
In irony, or in academic robes ?
No matter. There'll be only one or two
Who really know ; and I shall not be there
To vex you, from my corner, with one smile.

Lord, what a pack of lies you'll have to tell !
It is the custom. When my turn arrives—
'Twill not be long,—remember, please, I want
Truth, the whole truth, or nothing."
I saw one night
A member walking home with him—to thank him
For his support that morning. Jean Guettard
Turned on his threshold, growling like a bear.
" You owe me nothing. I believed my vote
Was right, or else you never should have had it.
Pray do not think I liked you."
A grim door
Opened and closed like iron in the face
Of his late friend and now indignant foe ;
To whom no less, if he had needed it,
Guettard would still have given his own last sou.

He came into his lonely room that night,
And sat and stared into the fluttering fire.
I, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, was there ; and I could see
More in his eyes than even Condorcet saw,
Condorcet, who of all his friends remained
Most faithful to the end.
But, at the hour
When Claire would lay his supper, a light hand tapped
Timidly on his door. He sat upright
And turned with startled eyes.
" Enter," he called.
A wide-eyed, pale-faced child came creeping in.
" What ! Little Claire ! " he cried.
" Your mother is not better ! "
She stood before him,
The fire-light faintly colouring her thin face,—
" M'sieur, she is very ill. You are a doctor.
Come, quickly."

Through the narrow, ill-lighted streets
Old Jean Guettard went hobbling, a small hand
Clutching his own, and two small wooden shoes
Clattering beside him, till the child began
To droop. He lifted her gently in his arms
And hobbled on. The thin, white, tear-stained face,
Pressing against his old grey-bristled cheek,
Directed him, now to left and now to right.
" O, quick, M'sieur ! " Then, into an alley, dark
As pitch, they plunged. The third door on the right !
Into the small sad house they went, and saw
By the faint guttering candle-light—the mother,
Shivering and burning on her tattered bed.
Two smaller children knelt on either side
Worn out with fear and weeping.
All that night
Guettard, of all true kings of science then,
Obscure, yet first in France and all the world,
Watched, laboured, bathed the brow and raised the head,
Moistened the thirsting lips, and knew it vain ;
Knew, as I knew, that in a hundred years
Knowledge might conquer this ; but he must fight
A losing battle, and fight it in the dark
No better armed than Galen.
He closed her eyes
At dawn. He took the children to his house ;
Prayed with them ; dried their tears ; and, while they slept,
Shed tears himself, remembering—a green hill,
A Rock against the sky.

He cared for them, as though they were his own.
Guettard, the founder of two worlds of thought,
Taught them their letters. " None can tell," he said,
" What harvests are enfolded for the world
In one small grain of this immortal wheat.

But I, who owe so much to little things
In childhood ; and have seen, among the rocks,
What vast results may wait upon the path
Of one blind life, under a vanished sea,
Bow down in awe before this human life."

V

THE RETURN

Ever, as he grew older, life became
More sacred to him.
" In a thousand years
Man will look back with horror on this world
Where men could babble about the Lamb of God,
Then turn and kill for food one living thing
That looks through two great eyes, so like their own.
I have had living creatures killed for me ;
But I will have no more."
Though Nature laughed
His mood to scorn, said Shadow-of-a-Leaf, the day
Will come (I have seen it come a myriad times)
When, through one mood like this, Nature will climb
Out of its nature, and make all things new.
Who prophesied cities, when the first blind life
Crawled from the sea, to breathe that strange bright air,
And conquer its own past ?
" I have no theory of this wild strange world,"
Said Jean Guettard,
" But, if the God that made it dies with us
Into immortal life. . . ."
" There, there's the meaning," whispered Shadow-of-a-Leaf
" Could we but grasp it. There's the harmony
Of life, and death, and all our mortal pain."
I heard that old man whispering in the dark,
" O, little human life, so lost to sight
Among the eternal ages, I, at least,

Find in this very darkness the one Fact
That bows my soul before you."

Once again
The mists began to roll away like smoke.
I saw a patch of vines upon the hill
Above Étampes ; and through the mists I saw
Old Jean Guettard, with snowy wind-blown hair,
Nearing the shrouded summit. As he climbed,
Slowly the last thin veils dissolved away.
He lifted up his eyes to see the Rock.
The hill was bare. His facts were well confirmed.
Sun, wind, and rain, and the sharp chisels of frost
Had broken it down. The Rock was on its way
In brook and river, with all the drifting hills,
And all his life, to the remembering sea.
He looked around him, furtively. None was near.
Down, on his knees,
Among the weather-worn shards of his lost youth,
Dropt Jean Guettard.
The mist closed over him.
The world dissolved away. The vision died,
Leaving me only a voice within the heart,
Far off, yet near, the whisper of Shadow-of-a-Leaf.

The rain had beaten. The wind had blown.
The hill was bare as the sky that day.
Mother and Child from the height had gone.
The wind and rain, said Jean Guettard,
Had crumbled even the Rock away.

VI. IN SWEDEN

LINNÆUS

It was his garden that began it all,
A magical garden for a changeling child.

" The garden has bewitched him !
Carl ! Carl ! O, Carl ! Now where is that elfkin hiding ? "

It was the voice of Christina, wife of the Pastor,
Nils Linnæus, the Man of the Linden-tree.
Youthful and comely, she stood at her door in the twilight,
Calling her truant son.
Her flaxen hair
Kerchiefed with crisp white wings ; her rose-coloured apron
And blue-grey gown, like a harebell, yielding a glimpse
Of the shapeliest ankle and snowiest stocking in Sweden ;
She stood at her door, a picture breathed upon air.

She called yet again, and tilted her head to listen
As a faint, flushed, wild anemone turning aside
From a breeze out of elf land, teasing her delicate petals,
The breeze of the warm, white, green-veined wings of her
wooer ;
And again, a little more troubled at heart, she called,
" Supper-time, Carl ! "
But out of the fragrant pinewoods
Darkening round her, only the wood-pigeon cooed.
Down by the lake, from the alders, only the red-cap
Whistled three notes. Then all grew quiet again.

Even in his age, a ladder of life to heaven,
There had been a victory of another kind
To lighten through the world.
And Darwin knew it ;
But, while he marshalled his unnumbered truths,
He lost the Truth ; as one who takes command
Of multitudinous armies in the night,
And strives to envisage, in one sweep of the mind,
Each squadron and each regiment of the whole,
Ever the host that swept through his mind's eye,
Though all in ordered ranks and files, obscured
Army on army the infinite truth beyond.
The gates of Beauty closed against his mind,
And barred him out from that eternal realm,
Whose lucid harmonies on our night bestow
Glimpses of absolute knowledge from above ;
Unravelling and ennobling, making clear
Much that had baffled us, much that else was dark ;
So that the laws of Nature shine like roads,
Firm roads that lead through a significant world
Not downward, from the greater to the less,
But up to the consummate Soul of all.
He could not follow them now. Back, back and back,
He groped along the dark diminishing road.
The ecstasy of music died away.
The poet's vision melted into a dream.
He knew his loss, and mourned it ; but it marred
Not only his own happiness, as he thought.
It blurred his vision, even of his own truths.

He looked long at the butterfly's radiant wings,
Pondered their blaze of colour, and believed
That butterfly wooers choosing their bright mates
Through centuries of attraction and desire
Evolved this loveliness. For he only saw

The blaze of colour, the flash that lured the eye.
He did not see the exquisite pattern there,
The diamonded fans of the under-wing,
Inlaid with intricate harmonies of design ;
The delicate little octagons of pearl,
The moons like infinitesimal fairy flowers,
The lozenges of gold, and grey, and blue
All ordered in an intellectual scheme,
Where form to form responded and faint lights
Echoed faint lights, and shadowy fringes ran
Like elfin curtains on a silvery thread,
Shadow replying to shadow through the whole.

Did eyes of the butterfly wooer mark all this,—
A subtlety too fine for half mankind ?
He tossed a shred of paper on to his lawn ;
He saw the white wings blindly fluttering round it.
He did not hear the whisper of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Was this their exquisite artistry of choice ?
Had wooers like these evolved this loveliness ?

He groped into the orchestral universe
As one who strives to trace a symphony
Back to its cause, and with laborious care
Feels with his hand the wood of the violins,
And bids you mark—Oh, good, bleak, honest soul,
So fearful of false hopes !—that all is hollow.
He tells you on what tree the wood was grown.
He plucks the catgut, tells you whence it came,
Gives you the name and pedigree of the cat ;
Nay, even affirms a mystery, and will talk
Of sundry dark vibrations that affect
The fleshly instrument of the human ear ;
And so, with a world-excluding accuracy—
Oh, never doubt that every step was true !—

Melts the great music into less than air
And misses everything.
Everything ! On one side
The music soaring endlessly through heavens
Within the human soul ; on the other side,
The unseen Composer of whose transcendent life
The music speaks in souls made still to hear.
He clung to his *vera causa*. In that law
He saw the way of the Power, but not the Power
Determining the way. Did men reject
The laws of Newton, binding all the worlds,
Because they still knew nothing of the Power
That bound them ? The stone fell. He knew not why.
The sun controlled the planets, and the law
Was constant ; but the mystery of it was masked
Under a name ; and no man knew the Power
That gripped the worlds in that unchanging bond,
Or whether, in the twinkling of an eye,
The Power might not release them from that bond,
As a hand opens, and the wide universe
Change in a flash, and vanish like a shadow,
As prophets had foretold.
He could not think
That chance decreed the boundless march of law
He saw in the starry heavens. Yet he could think
Of " chance " on earth ; and, while he thought, declare
" Chance " was not " chance " but law unrecognised ;
Then, even while he said it, he would use
The ambiguous word, base his own law on " chance " ;
And, even while he used it, there would move
Before his eyes, in every flake of colour
Inlaid upon the butterfly's patterned wing,
Legions of atoms wheeling each to its place
In ever constant law ; and he knew well
That, even in the living eye that saw them,

The self-same Power that bound the starry worlds
Controlled a myriad atoms, every one
An ordered system; and, in every cloud
Of wind-blown dust and every breaking wave
Upon the storm-tossed sea, an infinite host
Of infinitesimal systems moved by law
Each to its place; and, in each growing flower,
Myriads of atoms like concentred suns
And planets, these to the leaf and those to the crown,
Moved in unerring order, and by a law
That bound all heights and depths of the universe,
In an unbroken unity. By what Power?
There was one Power, one only known to man,
That could determine action. Herschel knew it;
The power whereby the mind uplifts the hand
And lets it fall, the living personal Will.

Ah, but his task, his endless task on earth,
Bent his head earthward. He must find the way
Before he claimed the heights. No Newton he;
Though men began to acclaim him and his law
As though they solved all mysteries and annulled
All former creeds, and changed the heart of heaven.
No Newton he; not even a Galileo;
But one who patiently, doggedly laboured on,
As Tycho Brahe laboured in old days,
Numbering the stars, recording fact on fact,
For those, who, after centuries, might discern
The meaning and the cause of what he saw.
Visions of God and heaven were not for him,
Unless his "facts" revealed them, as the crown
Of his own fight for knowledge.
It might be
The final test of man, the narrow way
Proving him worthy of immortal life,

That he should face this darkness and this death
Worthily and renounce all easy hope,
All consolation, all but the wintry smile
Upon the face of Truth as he discerns it,
Here upon earth, his only glimmer of light,
Leading him onward to an end unknown.
Faith ! Faith ! O patient, inarticulate soul,
If this were faithlessness, there was a Power,
So whispered Shadow-of-a-Leaf, that shared it with him ;
The Power that bowed His glory into darkness
To make a world in suffering and in death,
The passionate price that even the Omnipotent
Must pay for love, and love's undying crown.

He hardly heard the whisper ; could not hear it
And keep his own resolve. He bowed his head
In darkness ; and, henceforth, those inward gates
Into the realms of the supernal light
Began to close.
He knew that they were closing ;
And yet—was this the dark key to Creation ?—
He shared the ecstasy also ; shared that sense
Of triumph ; broke the Bread and drank the Wine
In sacred drops and morsels of the truth ;
Shared, in renouncement of all else but truth,
A sense that he could never breathe in words
To any one else, a sense that in this age
It was expedient that a man should lose
The glory, and die this darker new-found death,
To save the people from their rounded creeds,
Their faithless faith, and crowns too lightly won.

Oh, yet the memory of one midnight hour !
Would that she knew. Would God that she knew now .

Truer than all his knowledge was that cry;
The cry of the blind life struggling through the dark,
Upward . . . the blind brow lifted to the unseen.

He groped along the dark unending way
And saw, although he knew not what he saw,
Out of the struggle of life, a mightier law
Emerging; and, when man could rise no higher
By the fierce law of Nature, he beheld
Nature herself at war against herself.
He heard, although he knew not what he heard,
A Voice that, triumphing over her clashing chords,
Resolved them into an infinite harmony.
Whose was that Voice? What Power within the flesh
Cast off the flesh for a glory in the mind,
And leapt to victory in self-conquering love?
What Voice, whose Power, cast Nature underfoot
In Bruno, when the flames gnawed at his flesh;
In Socrates; and, in those obscure Christs
Who daily die; and, though none other sees,
Lay hands upon the wheel of the universe
And master it; and the sun stands dark at noon?
These things he saw but dimly. All his life
He moved along the steep and difficult way
Of Truth in darkness; but the Voice of Truth
Whispered in darkness, out of the mire and clay,
And through the blood-stained agony of the world,
"Fear nothing. Follow Me. I *am* the Way."

So, when Death touched him also, and England bore
His dust into her deepening innermost shrine,
The Voice he heard long since, and could not hear,
Rose like the fuller knowledge, given by Death
To one that could best lead him upward now,
Rose like a child's voice, opening up the heavens,
I am the Resurrection and the Life.

EPILOGUE

Up the Grand Canyon the full morning flowed.
I heard the voices moving through the abyss
With the deep sound of pinewoods, league on league
Of singing boughs, each separate, each a voice,
Yet all one music ;
The Eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes, and can never change.

Man is not exiled from this Majesty,
The inscrutable Reality, which he shares
In his immortal essence. Man that doubts
All but the sensuous veils of colour and sound,
The appearances that he can measure and weigh,
Trusts, as the very fashioner of his doubt,
The imponderable thought that weighs the worlds,
The invisible thought that sees ; thought that reveals
The miracle of the eternal paradox—
The pure unsearchable Being that cannot be
Yet Is, *and still creates and governs all ;*
A Power that, being Unknowable, is best known ;
For His transcendent Being can reply
To every agony, " I am that which waits
Beyond the last horizon of your pain,
Beyond your wildest hope, your last despair,
Above your heaven, and deeper than your hell.
There is not room on earth for what ye seek.
Is there not room in Me ? "
Time is a shadow
Of man's own thought. Things past and things to come
Are closed in that full circle. He lives and reigns ;

Dies with the dying bird; and, in its death,
Receives it to His heart. No leaf can fall
Without Him; who, for ever pouring out
His passion into worlds that shall attain
Love in the highest at last, returns for ever
Along these roads of suffering and of death,
With all their lives upgathered to His heart
Into the heaven of heavens. How else could life
Lay hold on its infinitude, or win
The strength to walk with Love in complete light?
For, as a child that learns to walk on earth,
Life learns these little rhythms of earthly law,
Listens to simple seas that ebb and flow,
And spells the large bright order of the stars
Wherein the moving Reason is revealed
To man's up-struggling mind, or breathed like song
Into the quiet heart, as love to love.
So, step by step, the spirit of man ascends
Through joy and grief; and is withdrawn by death
From the sweet dust that might content it here,
Into His kingdom, the one central goal
Of the universal agony. He lives.
He lives and reigns, throned above space and time;
And, in that realm, freedom and law are one;
Fore-knowledge and all-knowledge and freewill,
Make everlasting music.

Far away
Along the unfathomable abyss it flowed,
A harmony so consummate that it shared
The silence of the sky; a song so deep
That only the still soul could hear it now:
New every morning the creative Word
Moves upon chaos. Yea, our God grows young.
Here, now, the eternal miracle is renewed.
Now, and for ever, God makes heaven and earth.

PART III. THE LAST VOYAGE

PRELUDE

THE mist rolled back.
 There was a roar of waters;
And it was night, black night, in midmost ocean,
Lonely and void, as when the lifeless planet
Moved without eyes to see or ears to hear,

Yet, after uncounted æons,
Out of the clashing of those blind elements,
Endlessly heaving and sinking, tossing their spindrift,
In what still seemed their old unchanging way,
Something—by what wild chemistry?—had arisen;
A vast and terrible Something had—evolved;
Something that had four thousand searching eyes,
And was approaching, through that darkness, now.

Night still concealed it. Winds and waves roared on,
Blind as of old; yet—as that Something neared,
The innermost values of the whole dark world
Seemed to be changed by its approaching power.

Then, with a long-drawn thunder, and blazing lights,
A monstrous portent surged across the dark. . . .
I saw a great ship, like a lighted City,
Cleaving that night, between two unseen worlds.

* * * * *

It passed, and left no trace, and the black brine
Heaved, as of old, when the blind lifeless planet
Moved without eyes to see or ears to hear.

Out of this lifeless welter, hither and thither,
Tossing its random spume through endless years,
By chance, no more, as the fool's heart ordains,
The life that shaped that monstrous portent rose,
Evolved—by what wild miracle? Had the less
Brought forth the greater, by those delicate grades
And slight divisions wherein the dim-eyed sophist
Delights to lose his soul; each grade a gulf
In thought, yet in itself so seeming narrow,
He counts them all as nothing, and leaps the abyss
Between the lifeless æons, and this dread *Now;*
When, urged by a purpose, moving to a goal,
That vast arrival thundered through the deep?

Whence? Whither? Why? It passed, and left no trace.
And That which lay beyond, the ultimate Cause,
And Goal of all—enduring through all change—
The self-subsistent, uncontingent Mover,
What word of That?
Only the vast black seething;
The salt cold spindrift, and the ghostly surf
As the dark hills dissolved and streamed away
Whispering,—*as it was in the beginning . . .*
Then, challenging, as the great new surges rose,
Et nunc, et semper; then that æonian roar
In saecula saeculorum, from beyond
The last horizons of the unsearchable sea.

The mist rolled down; and it was night, black night.

I

NIGHT, and the great ship like a lighted city
In mid-Atlantic, cleaving the cold black storm;
A city detached from all the coasts of man,
Speeding across the abyss of loneliness
Between two unseen worlds.

Unseen, I walked the long deserted decks
That dwindled into the gloom like rain-washed streets.
I peered through lighted windows; heard the sound
Of music from its wide, bright, pillared rooms,
Crowded with festive tables, gay with flowers.
I stole up shining corridors; and saw
In one dim cabin, under shaded lights,
A group of graver faces, hushed and still,
Intently watching a flushed unconscious child.

It was no dream. I heard her difficult breathing.
I saw the white-capped nurse; the kneeling mother,
With drawn and quivering under-lip; the father
Standing behind her, silent, with one hand
Laid gently on her shoulder; and the surgeon,
Two fingers on the child's wrist as he counted . . .
The gleam of the ticking watch.
At last he rose,
Muttering to the father—"I shall come back,
In half an hour."
Outside the purser's office
The captain met him.

" How is your little patient ? "
" No hope, unless I operate. It's a risk.
One chance in a thousand. If only we could have made
New York in time, Johns Hopkins has a man
That might have saved her. It will be too late.
We're fifteen hundred miles away to-night."—
" Your skill and your experience. . . ."
" Ah, but this
Is different. It's a case for specialists.
A fair all-round musician can't compete
With Kreisler—not in Bach. Besides, at sea,
We haven't half the equipment."—
" What is the name
Of this Johns Hopkins' man, who might have saved her ? "
—" Marlowe. I wish to God I could consult him."—
—" I think you can. He is on his way to Europe.
I saw his name in our own wireless news
This morning. He is somewhere on the Atlantic."—
—" What ship ? "—
" The *City of Paris*."—
" Where is she now ? "
" Four hundred miles away."
He beckoned the purser—
" Telephone up to the wireless-room, and tell them
To get the *City of Paris* . . . an urgent message
Is coming through, at once."

* * * * *

The storm roared
And whistled across the bare, dark, upper deck
As they climbed up to the small bright wireless-room.
All round them surged the night of midmost ocean,
Inhuman, void, as when the lifeless planet
Moved without eye to see or ear to hear,

Unconscious through the unconscious. . . .
Four hundred miles away, through that black night,
The *City of Paris*, plunging the opposite way,
Bore, in the midget span of one man's brow
The saving light—a little vanishing spark . . .
Sundered from those who needed it, by gulfs
Of thundering darkness, leagues of volleying sleet,
Wild howling maelstroms of the world of matter,
Through which, outside the wireless-room, no voice
Could pierce, no message pass from mind to mind.
They closed the padded door. The tumult died.
At once, in that small luminous inner realm,
Through deeper regions, undisturbed by storm,
Annihilating space the signals came.
Tap-tap, *tap-tap*, the moving finger wrote.
Five hundred miles to westward the *Majestic*
Told the *Homeric*, far to eastward now,
Of hurricanes approaching. *Tap-tap-tap*
The dark *Leviathan* answered from the north.
The listener, with the head-clips, heard their voices
In an ethereal calm. As though a child
Were playing with its toys, three feet away,
The *Mauretania*, surging through the night,
Six hundred miles to southward, droned its tale.
Carmania, like an elfin horn, replied
Nearing the fog-bound Banks; while, racing home,
Under clear stars, through sleeker softer seas,
The *Berengaria* flung her deeper chords
Of welcome and farewell to half the world.

"You have sent our call out?"
"Yes—no answer yet.
Ah, here she comes!" *Tap-tap*, a silver note
Rose high and clear, vibrating like a star,
The *City of Paris*.

The moving finger wrote,
Dot—dash—dot—dash. " Is Dr. Marlowe aboard ? "
—" Yes "—
" Tell him that the surgeon of the *Olympic*
Wants his advice . . . an urgent case . . . a child."
—" I'll send for him, immediately."
" Take down
These details in the meantime, and repeat.
Marlowe will understand. When he has read them
Give me his answer, as quickly as you can." . . .
Tap-tap, tap-tap, dot—dash, dot—dash, dot—dash.

I walked upon the sheltered deck below
While the swift messages passed. I heard the sound
Of music, and the shuffle of dancing feet
In the great ball-room ; caught a hundred gleams
Of separate lives, each going its own way,
While the one ship took all to the one goal
(As the one planet bears ten thousand ships,
And the one cosmos binds a myriad worlds . . .),
Whence ? Whither ? Why ? . . .
In the dark-panelled lounge
Wreathed with cigar-smoke, voices quietly drawled,
Clubs and *No Trumps*. Cards gleamed and glasses tinkled.
There, and there only, in solemn make-believe,
I saw the reign of Chance.
In the dark bows,
A strange old fellow-passenger, buried and swathed
In travelling coat and muffler ; his keen face,
All but the deep magnetic eyes, obscured
Beneath his dark slouch hat,—came up and joined me.
" You've heard," he said ; and as he spoke, my flesh
Tingled as at a voice from other worlds.
" They stop the ship at ten, for half an hour,

While our good surgeon operates on that child.
Marlowe advised it, instantly, by wireless.
He'll be in touch throughout."
" You think they'll save her ? "
He glanced at me and answered, " *They* may save her.
But who are *They ?* "

II

In a small cabin, lit by a single port-hole,
The poet, rapt and tense, took up his pen. . . .

Whose Mind dictated, or whose Will compelled
His half-unconscious music? Not his own.

But, while he pondered that deep mystery
Of order and control throughout the world,
And groped for one clear instance, only one
Wherein the Eternal Intellect might be seen
Directly at work among material things,
Using them, and conveying them to an end
Directly, as the mind uplifts the hand
To ends beyond the scope of 'natural law'
And secondary causes,
a strange light
For one wild moment flashed on him. He saw
The Supreme Art, the one world-ruling Will
Directly at work, upon material things.
He saw them moved—caught the controlling Power
In act, where Science dropt its proud precision,
And fell back blindly on an empty name—
Instinct. The swallow, drawn across the seas
Like an unerring needle, to its goal.
Instinct. That elfin nest of twigs and clay
Built by the ignorant instrument—in whose hand?
Instinct. The bee, a cluster of blind atoms,
Building its architectural honeycomb
With intellectual gold. And, clearer still,

In mockery, colder than the cynical snarl
Of Nero, " The Republic has no need
Of savants. Let the people's will be done
On earth, and let the headless trunk of Truth
Be trampled down by numbers. Tread in the mire
All excellence and all skill. Daub your raw wounds
With dirt of the street; elect the sick to health.
It is the people's will, and they shall live.
Nay, crown the eternal Power who rules by law
With this red cap of your capricious will,
And ye shall hear His everlasting voice
More clearly than ye heard it when He spoke
In stillness, through the souls of lonely men,
On starry heights. Lift up your heads and hear
His voice in the whirling multitude's wild-beast roar,
Not these men, but Barabbas."
Must the mind
Turn back to tyranny, then, and trust anew
To harnessed might? The listening soul still heard
A more imperative call. Though Evil wore
A myriad masks and reigned as wickedly
In peoples as in kings, Truth, Truth alone,
Whether upheld by many or by few,
Wore the one absolute crown. Though Pilate flung
His murderous jest at Truth—the law remained
That answered his dark question; man's one clue,
The law that all true seekers after Truth
Hold in their hands; the law, a golden thread
That, loyally followed, leads them to full light,
Each by his own dark way, till all the world
Is knit together in harmony that sets free.
Bridge-builders of the universe, they fling
Their firm and shining roads from star to star,
From earth to heaven. At his appointed task,
Lamarck held grimly on (as once he gripped

His wavering grenadiers) till Life or Death
Relieved him. But he knew his cause at last.
Jardin du Roi became *Jardin des Plantes;*
And the red tumult surging round his walls
Died to a whisper of leaves.
His mind groped back,
Back through the inconceivable ages now,
To terrible revolutions of the globe,
Huge catastrophic rendings of the hills,
Red floods of lava; cataracts of fire;
Monstrous upheavals of the nethermost deep;
Whereby as Cuvier painted them, in hues
Of blind disaster, all the hosts of life
In each æonian period, like a swarm
Of ants beneath the wheels of Juggernaut,
Were utterly abolished.
Did God create
After each earth-disaster, then, new hosts
Of life to range her mountains and her seas;
New forms, new patterns, fresh from His careless Hand,
Yet all so closely akin to those destroyed?
Or did this life-stream, from one fountain-head,
Through the long changes of unnumbered years
Flow on, unbroken, slowly branching out
Into new beauty, as a river winds
Into new channels? One, singing through the hills,
Mirrors the hanging precipice and the pine;
And one through level meadows curves away,
Turns a dark wheel, or foams along a weir,
Then, in a pool of shadow, drowns the moon.

III

AN ENGLISH INTERLUDE: ERASMUS DARWIN

ALREADY in England, bearing the same fire,
A far companion whom he never knew
Had long been moving on the same dark quest,
But through what quiet secluded walks of peace.

Out of the mist emerged the little City
Of Lichfield, clustering round its Minster Pool
That, like a fragment of the sky on earth,
Reflected its two bridges, gnarled old trees,
Half-timbered walls; a bare-legged child at play
Upon its brink; two clouds like floating swans,
Two swans like small white clouds; a boy that rode
A big brown cart-horse lazily jingling by;
And the cathedral, like a three-spired crown,
Set on its northern bank.
Then, from the west,
Above it, walled away from the steep street,
I saw Erasmus Darwin's bluff square house.
Along its front, above the five stone steps
That climbed to its high door, strange vines and fronds
Made a green jungle in their dim prison of glass.
Behind, its windows overlooked a close
Of rambling mellow roofs, and coldly stared
At the cathedral's three fore-shortened spires,
Which seemed to draw together, as though in doubt
Of what lay hidden in those bleak staring eyes.

There dwelt that eager mind, whom fools deride
For laced and periwigged verses on his flowers;
Forgetting how he strode before his age,
And how his grandson caught from his right hand
A fire that lit the world.
I saw him there,
In his brown-skirted coat, among his plants,
Pondering the thoughts, at which that dreamer sneered,
Who, through a haze of opium, saw a star
Twinkling within the tip of the crescent moon.
Dispraise no song for tricks that fancy plays,
Nor for blind gropings after an unknown light,
But let no echo of Abora praise for this
The drooping pinion and unseeing eye.
Seek, poet, on thy sacred height, the strength
And glory of that true vision which shall grasp,
In clear imagination, earth and heaven,
And from the truly seen ascend in power
To those high realms whereof our heaven and earth
Are images and shadows, and their law
Our shining lanthorn and unfailing guide.
There, if the periwigged numbers failed to fly,
Let babbling dreamers who have also failed
Wait for another age. The time will come
When all he sought and lost shall mount and sing.
He saw the life-stream branching out before him,
Its forms and colours changing with their sky:
Flocks in the south that lost their warm white fleece;
And, in the north, the stubble-coloured hare
Growing snow-white against the winter snows.
The frog that had no jewel in his head,
Except his eyes, was yet a fairy prince,
For he could change the colours of his coat
To match the mud of the stream wherein he reigned;
And, if he dwelt in trees, his coat was green.

He saw the green-winged birds of Paraguay
Hardening their beaks upon the shells they cracked;
The humming-bird, with beak made needle-fine
For sucking honey from long-throated blooms;
Finches with delicate beaks for buds of trees,
And water-fowl that, in their age-long plashing
At the lake's edge, had stretched the films of skin
Between their claws to webs. Out through the reeds
They rowed at last, and swam to seek their prey.
He saw how, in their war against the world,
Myriads of lives mysteriously assumed
The hues that hid them best; the butterfly dancing
With its four petals among so many flowers,
Itself a winged flower; the hedgerow birds
With greenish backs like leaves, but their soft breasts
Light as a downy sky, so that the hawk,
Poised overhead, sees only a vanishing leaf;
Or, if he swoops along the field below them,
Loses their silvery flight against the cloud.

He saw the goldfinch, vivid as the blooms
Through which it flutters, as though their dews had splashed
Red of the thistle upon its head and throat,
And on its wings the dandelion's gold.
He saw the skylark coloured like its nest
In the dry grass; the partridge, grey and brown
In mottled fields, escaping every eye,
Till the foot stumbles over it, and the clump
Of quiet earth takes wing and whirrs away.
I saw him there, a strange and lonely soul,
An eagle in the Swan of Lichfield's pen,
Stretching clipped wings and staring at the sky.
He saw the multitudinous hosts of life,
All creatures of the sea and earth and air,
Ascending from one living spiral thread,

Through tracts of time, unreckonable in years.
Hė saw them varying as the plastic clay
Under the Sculptor's hands.
He saw them flowing
From one Eternal Fount beyond our world,
The inscrutable and indwelling Primal Power,
His only *vera causa ;* by whose will
There was no gulf between the first and last.
There was no break in that long line of law
Between the first life drifting in the sea,
And man, proud man, the crowning form of earth,
Man whose own spine, the framework of his pride,
The fern-stem of his life, trunk of his tree,
Sleeps in the fish, the reptile, and the orang,
As all those lives in his own embryo sleep.

What deeper revolution, then, must shake
Those proud ancestral dynasties of earth ?
What little man-made temples must go down ?
And what august new temple must arise,
One vast cathedral, gargoyled with strange life,
Surging through darkness, up to the unknown end ?

IV

LAMARCK AND CUVIER: THE *VERA CAUSA*

FEAR nothing, Swan of Lichfield. Tuck thy head
Beneath thy snowy wing and sleep at ease.
Drift quietly on thy shadowy Minster Pool.
No voice comes yet to shake thy placid world.
Far off—in France—thy wingless angels make
Strange havoc, but the bearer of this fire,
The wise physician's unknown comrade toils
Obscurely now, through his more perilous night,
Seeking his *vera causa*, with blind eyes.
Blind, blind as Galileo in his age,
Lamarck embraced his doom and, as in youth,
Held to the post assigned, till Life or Death
Relieved him. All those changes of the world
He had seen more clearly than his unknown friend;
And traced their natural order.
He saw the sea-gull like a flake of foam
Tossed from the waves of that creative sea;
The fish that like a speckled patch of sand
Slides over sand upon its broad flat side,
And twists its head until its nether eye
Looks upward, too, and what swam upright once
Is fixed in its new shape, and the wry mouth
Grimaces like a gnome at its old foes.
He saw the swarming mackerel shoals that swim
Near the crisp surface, rippled with blue and green
Round their dark backs to trick the pouncing gull,
But silver-bellied to flash like streaks of light

Over the ravenous mouths that from below
Snap at the leaping gleams of the upper sea.
And all these delicate artistries were wrought
By that strange Something-Else which blind men call
" Environment," and the name is all their need ;
A Something-Else that, through the sum of things,
Labours unseen ; and, for its own strange ends,
Desirous of more swiftness and more strength,
Will teach the hunted deer to escape and fly,
Even while it leads the tiger to pursue.

He saw that sexual war ; the stags that fought
In mating-time ; the strong confirmed in power
By victory. Lust and hunger, pleasure and pain,
Like instruments in a dread Designer's hand,
Lured or dissuaded, tempted and transformed.

He saw dark monsters in primeval forests
Tearing the high green branches down for food
Age after age, till from their ponderous heads
Out of their own elastic flesh they stretched
A trunk that, like a long grey muscular snake,
Could curl up through the bunches of green leaves,
And pluck their food at ease as cattle browse ;
Life's own dark effort aiding that strange Power
Without, and all controlled in one great plan,
Grotesquely free, and beautifully at one
With law, upsurging to the unknown end.
All Nature like a vast chameleon changed ;
And all these forms of life through endless years,
Changing, developing, from one filament rose.
Man, on the heights, retravelled in nine moons
All that long journey in little, never to lose
What life had learned on its æonian way :
Man on the heights ; but not divided now

From his own struggling kindred of the night.
Few dared to think it yet and set him free
Through knowledge of himself and his own power;
Few, yet, in France or England. Let him bask
Where in six days God set him at his ease
Among His wingless angels; there to hate
The truth, until he breaks his own vain heart
And finds the law at last and walks with God,
Who, not abhorring even the mire and clay
In the beginning, breathed His life through all.
This was his *vera causa*. Hate, contempt,
Ridicule, like a scurrilous wind swooped down
From every side. Great Cuvier, with the friends
Of orthodoxy, sneered—could species change
Their forms at will? Could the lean tiger's need
To crouch in hiding stripe his tawny flesh
With shadows of the cane-brake where he lay?
Could the giraffe, by wishing for the leaves
Beyond his reach, add to his height one inch?
Or could the reptile's fond desire to fly
Create his wings?
Could Cuvier read one line
Of this blind man, he might have held his peace,
Found his own *vera causa*, and sunk his pride;
And even the wiser Darwin, when he came
Might have withheld his judgment for an hour,
And learned from his forerunner. But, in their haste,
They flung away his fire; and, as he fell,
They set their heels upon it and stamped it out.
Not always does the distant age restore
The balance, or posterity renew
The laurel on the cold dishonoured brow
Unjustly robbed and blindly beaten down.
He laboured on in blindness. At his side
One faithful daughter, labouring with her pen,

As he dictated, wrote, month after month,
Year after year; and, when her father died,
She saw him tossed into the general grave,
The pauper's fosse, where none can trace him now,
In Montparnasse, but wrapt in deeper peace
Among the unknown and long-forgotten dead.

VIII. IN GERMANY

GOETHE

I

THE DISCOVERER

THE wreathing mist was quietly breathed away.
I walked below a little hill at night;
The dark Ilm flowed beside me; the night air
Was bright with stars and blossoming apple-boughs
That clustered round one small dark hermitage
His *Gartenhaus*, above me on the hill,
As though it were the heart of all earth's beauty.
Its open door, a gap of golden light
In deep blue gloom, told me that he was there.
I saw the darker trees asleep below.
Beyond them, like a cloud of memories
Unseen, that great small kingdom of the mind,
The city of Weimar, slumbered.
Like a shadow,
Tracking the Sun-god to his midnight lair,
I climbed to the lighted cabin on the hill,
And I saw Goethe.
At his side, a lamp
On a rude table, out of tumbled waves
Of manuscript, like an elfin lighthouse rose.
His bed, a forester's couch for summer nights,
Was thrust into a corner. Rows of books
Lined the rough walls.

A letter was in his hand
From Craigenputtock; and while he looked at it,
The unuttered thoughts came flowing into the mind
Of his invisible listener—Shadow-of-a-Leaf.
All true, my friend; but there's no half-way house.
Rid you of Houndsditch, and you'll not maintain
This quite ungodlike severance of mankind
From Nature and its laws; though I should lose
My Scots apostle, if I called it so.
What's an apostle? Is it one who sees
Just so much of his hero, as reflects
Himself and his own thoughts? I like him well
And yet he makes me lonelier than before.
Houndsditch may go; but Cuvier will go first;
With all the rest who isolate mankind
From its true place in Nature.
Everywhere
I saw the one remodulated form.
The leaf ascended to mysterious bliss
And was assumed, with happy sister-leaves,
Into the heavenly glory of a flower.
Pistil and stamen, calyx and bright crown
Of coloured petals, all were leaves transformed,
Transfigured, from one type.
I saw in man
And his wild kinsfolk of the woods and seas,
In fish and serpent, eagle and orang,
One knotted spine that curled into a skull.
It ran through all their patterns everywhere,
Playing a thousand variants on one theme,
Branching through all the frame of fins and wings
And spreading through their jointed hands and feet.

Throughout this infinite universe I heard
The music of one law.

Is man alone
Belied by all the signs of his ascent?
Are men even now so far above the beasts?
What can the tiger teach them when they kill?
Are they so vain that they'd deny the bones
An inch beneath their skin—bones that when stripped
Of flesh and mixed with those of their dumb kin
Themselves could not distinguish? How they clung
To that distinction in the skull of man.
It lacked the inter-maxillary. They grew angry
When I foretold it would be found one day.
What's truth to a poet? Back to your dainty lies!
And then—one day—I found it.
Did they say
Strange work for a poet? Is mankind asleep
That it can never feel what then I felt,
To find my faith so quietly confirmed?
I held it in my hand and stared at it,
An eyeless hollow skull that once could think
Its own strange thoughts and stare as well as we;
A skull that once was rocked upon a breast,
And looked its deathless love through dying eyes;
And, in that skull, above the incisor teeth,
The signs that men denied,—of its ascent
Through endless ages, in the savage night
Of jungle-worlds, before mankind was born.

No thought for poets, and no wonder there?
No gateway to the kingdoms of the mind?
No miracle in the miracle that I saw
Touched, held.
My body tingled. All my veins
Froze with the inconceivable mystery,
The weirdness and the wonder of it all.
No vision? And no dream? Let poets play

At bowls with Yorick's relic then, for ever;
Or blow dream-bubbles. I've a world to shape;
A law to guide me, and a God to find.

That night in sleep I saw—it was no dream!—
It was too wild, too strange, too darkly true
And all too human in its monstrous pangs
To be a dream. I saw it, and I live.
I saw, I saw, and closed these eyes to see
That terrible birth in darkness, the black night
Of naked agony that first woke the soul.

Night and the jungle, burning with great stars,
Rolled all around me. There were steaming pools
Of darkness, and the smell of the wild beast
Musky and acrid on the blood-warm air.
The night was like a tiger's hot sweet mouth;
I heard a muffled roar, and a wild cry,
A shriek, a fall.
I saw an uncouth form,
Matted with hair, stretched on the bloodstained earth;
And, in the darkness, darker than the night,
Another form uncouth, with matted hair,
Long-armed, like a gorilla, stooping low
Above his mate.
She did not move or breathe.
He felt her body with his long-clawed hands,
And called to her—a harsh, quick, startled cry.
She did not hear. One arm was tightly wound
About her little one. Both were strangely still,
Stiller than sleep.
He squatted down to wait.
They did not move all night. At dawn he stood
By that stiff mockery. He stretched up his arms
And clutched at the red sun that mocked him, too.

Then, out of his blind heart, with one fierce pang,
The man-child, Grief, was born.
His round dark eyes
Pricked with strange brine, and his broad twitching mouth
Quivered. He fell on the dark unanswering earth
Beside his dead, with inarticulate cries,
Great gasping sobs that seemed to rend his flesh
And shook him through and through.
The night returned and, with the night, a hope,
Because he could not see their staring eyes.
He rushed into the jungle and returned
With fruits and berries, ripe and soft and red.
He rubbed the dark wet plums against their lips.
He smeared the juices on their locked white teeth;
Pleading with little murmurs, while the stars
Wheeled overhead, and velvet-footed beasts
Approached and stared with eyes of gold and green;
And even the little leaves were all alive;
And tree-toads chirruped; but those dark forms lay still.

Day followed night. He did not know them now.
All that had been so swift to answer him
Was gone. But whither? Every day he saw
A ball of light, arising in the East,
And moving overhead the self-same way
Into the West. . . .
The strange new hunger eating at his heart
Urged him to follow it, stumbling blindly on
Through endless forests; but it moved so swiftly
He could not overtake it, could not reach
The place where it went down, ere darkness came.
Then—in the dark—a shadow sometimes moved
Before him, like the shadow he had lost,
And with a cry, *Yoo! Yoo!* he would awake
And, crashing through the forests to the West,

Would try to steal a march upon the sun,
And see it rise inexorably behind him,
And sail above, inexorably, at noon,
And sink beyond, inexorably, at night.

Then, after many suns had risen and set,
He saw at dusk a blaze of crimson light
Between the thinning tree-trunks and emerged
Out of the forest into a place of rocks,
Washed by a water greater than the world.
He stood, an uncouth image carved in stone,
Staring into the West. He saw the sun
Staining the clouds and sinking into the flood.
His lips were parched with thirst, a deeper thirst
Than any spring on earth could quench again;
And when he laid him down upon the shore
To drink of that deep water, he knew well
That he was nearer now to what he sought,
Because it tasted salt as his lost tears.

He drank. He waded out, and drank again.
Then a big wave of darkness rushed upon him,
And rolled him under. He rose, and with great arms
Swam out into that boundless flood of brine
Towards the last glimmer of light; a dark, blind brute,
Sobbing and panting, till the merciful waves,
Salt in his eyes and salt upon his lips,
Had drawn the agony out of his labouring limbs
And gently as the cradling boughs that once
Rocked him to sleep, embraced and drew him down
Into oblivion, the first life that caught
With eyes bewildered by the light they knew,
A glimpse of the unknown light beyond the world.

GOETHE

II

THE PROPHET

BEFORE the first wild matins of the thrush
Had ended, or the sun sucked up the dew,
I saw him wrestling with his thoughts. He rose,
Laid down that eagle's feather in his hand,
And looked at his own dawn.
He did not speak.
Only the secret music of his mind
In an enchanted silence flowed to meet
The listener, as his own great morning flowed
Through all the woods and meadows at his feet.
Colours and forms of earth and heaven you flow
Like clouds around a star—the streaming robe
Of an Eternal Glory. Let the law
Of Beauty, in your rhythmic folds, by night
And day, through all the universe, reveal
The way of the unseen Mover to these eyes.

Last night I groped into the dark abyss
Under the feet of man, and saw Thee there
Ascending, from that depth below all depth.
Oh, now, at dawn, as I look up to heaven
Descend to meet me, on my upward way.
How shall they grasp Thy glory who despise
The law that is Thy kingdom here on earth,

Our way of freedom and our path to Thee?
How shall they grasp that law, or rightly know
One truth in Nature, who deny Thy Power,
Unresting and unhasting, everywhere?
How shall the seekers, bound to their own tasks,
Each following his own quest, each spying out
His fragment of a truth, reintegrate
Their universe and behold all things in one?
Be this the task of Song, then, to renew
That universal vision in the soul.
Rise, Poet, to thy universal height,
Then stoop, as eagles do from their wide heaven
On their particular prey. Between the clouds
They see more widely and truly than the mole
At work in his dark tunnel, though he cast
His earth upon the fields they watch afar.
Work on, inductive mole; but there's a use
In that too lightly abandoned way of thought,
The way of Plato, and the way of Christ,
That man must find again, ere he can build
The temple of true knowledge. Those who trust
To Verulam's *Novum Organum* alone,
Never can build it. Quarriers of the truth,
They cut the stones, but cannot truly lay them;
For only he whose deep remembering mind
Holds the white archetype, can to music build
His towers, from the pure pattern imprinted there.
He, and he only, in one timeless flash
Through all this moving universe discerns
The inexorable sequences of law,
And, in the self-same flash, transfiguring all,
Uniting and transcending all, beholds
With my Spinoza's own ecstatic eyes
God in the hidden law that fools call "chance,"
God in the star, the flower, the moondrawn wave,

God in the snake, the bird, and the wild beast,
God in that long ascension from the dark,
God in the body and in the soul of man,
God uttering life, and God receiving death.

IX. IN ENGLAND

DARWIN

I

CHANCE AND DESIGN

" I am the whisper that he ceased to hear,"
The quiet voice of Shadow-of-a-Leaf began,
And, as he spoke, the flowing air before me
Shone like a crystal sphere, wherein I saw
All that he pictured, through his own deep eyes.

I waited in his garden there, at Down.
I peered between the crooklights of a hedge
Where ragged robins grew.
Far off, I heard
The clocklike rhythm of an ironshod staff
Clicking on gravel, clanking on a flint.
Then, round the sand-walk, under his trees he strode,
A tall lean man, wrapt in a loose dark cloak,
His big soft hat of battered sun-burnt straw
Pulled down to shade his face. But I could see,
For I looked upward, the dim brooding weight
Of silent thought that soon would shake the world.

He paused to watch an ant upon its way.
He bared his head. I saw the shaggy brows
That like a mountain-fortress overhung
The deep veracious eyes, the dogged face

Where kindliness and patience, knowledge, power,
And pain quiescent under the conquering will,
In that profound simplicity which marks
The stature of the mind, the truth of art,
The majesty of every natural law.
The child's wise innocence, and the silent worth
Of human grief and love, had set their seal.

I stole behind him, and he did not hear
Or see me. I was only Shadow-of-a-Leaf;
And yet—I knew the word was on its way
That might annul his life-work in an hour.
I heard the whisper of every passing wing
Where, wrapt in peace, among the hills of Kent,
The patient watchful intellect had prepared
A mightier revolution for mankind
Even than the world-change of Copernicus
When the great central earth began to move
And dwine to a grain of dust among the stars.
I saw him pondering over a light-winged seed
That floated, like an elfin aeronaut,
Across the path. He caught it in his hand
And looked at it. He touched its delicate hooks
And set it afloat again. He watched it sailing,
Carrying its tiny freight of life away
Over the quick-set hedge, up, into the hills.
I heard him muttering, " beautiful ! Surely this
Implies design !
Design ? " Then, from his face
The wonder faded, and he shook his head;
But with such reverence and humility
That his denial almost seemed a prayer.

A prayer—for, not long after, in his house,
I saw him bowed, the first mind of his age,

Bowed, helpless, by the deathbed of his child;
Pondering, with all that knowledge, all that power,
Powerless, and ignorant of the means to save;
A dumb Prometheus, bending his great head
In silence, as he drank those broken words
Of thanks, the pitiful thanks of small parched lips,
For a sip of water, a smile, a cooling hand
On the hot brow; thanks for his goodness—God!
Thanks from a dying child, just ten years old!

And, while he stood in silence by her grave,
Hearing the ropes creak as they lowered her down
Into the cold dark hollow, while he breathed
The smell of the moist earth, those calm strange words-
I am the Resurrection and the Life,
Echoed and echoed through his lonely mind,
Only to deepen his agony of farewell
Into Eternity.
Dumbly there he strove
To understand how accents so divine,
In words so worthy of eternal power,
So postulant of it in their calm majesty,
Could breathe through mortal lips.
Madman or God,
Who else could say them?
God it could not be,
If in his mortal blindness he saw clear;
And yet, and yet, could madness wring the heart
Thus, thus, and thus, for nineteen hundred years?
Would that she knew, would God that she knew now,
How much we loved her!

The blind world, still ruled
By shams, and following in hypnotic flocks
The sheep-bell of an hour, still thought of him

" The Man of Science " as less or more than man,
Coldly aloof from love and grief and pain ;
Held that he knew far more, and felt far less
Than other men, and, even while it praised
The babblers for their reticence and their strength,
The shallow for their depth, the blind for sight,
The rattling weathercocks for their love of truth,
Ere long would brand, as an irreverent fool,
This great dumb simple man, with his bowed head.

Could the throng see that drama, as I saw it—
I, Shadow-of-a-Leaf,—could the blind throng discern
The true gigantic drama of those hours
Among the quiet hills as, one by one,
His facts fell into place ; their broken edges
Joined, like the fragments of a vast mosaic,
And, slowly, the new picture of the world,
Emerging in majestic pageantry
Out of the primal dark, before him grew ;
Grew by its own inevitable law ;
Grew, and earth's ancient fantasies dwindled down ;
The stately fabric of the old creation
Crumbled away ; while man, proud demigod,
Stripped of all arrogance now, priest, beggar, king,
Captive and conqueror, all must own alike
Their ancient lineage. Kin to the dumb beasts
By the red life that flowed through all their veins
From hearts of the same shape, beating all as one
In man and brute ; kin, by those kindred forms
Of flesh and bone, with eyes and ears and mouths
That saw and heard and hungered like his own,
His mother Earth reclaimed him.
Back and back,
He traced them, till the last faint clue died out
In lifeless earth and sea.

I watched him striving
To follow further, bending his great brows
Over the intense lens. . . .
Far off, I heard
The murmur of human life, laughter and weeping;
Heard the choked sobbings by a million graves,
And saw a million faces, wrung with grief,
Lifted forlornly to the Inscrutable Power.

I saw him raise his head. I heard his thought
As others hear a whisper—*Surely this*
Implies design!
And worlds on aching worlds
Of dying hope were wrapped in those four words.
He stared before him, wellnigh overwhelmed
For one brief moment, with instinctive awe
Of Something that . . . determined every force
Directed every atom. . . .
Then, in a flash,
The indwelling vision vanished at the voice
Of his own blindfold reason. For what mind
Could so unravel the complicated threads,
The causes that are caused by the effects
Of other causes, intricately involved,
Woven and interwoven, in endless mazes,
Wandering through infinite time, infinite space,
And yet, an ordered and mysterious whole,
Before whose very being all mortal power
Must abdicate its sovereignty?
A dog
Might sooner hope to leap beyond the mind
Of Newton than a man might hope to grasp
Even in this little whirl of earth and sun
The Scheme of the All-determining Absolute.

And yet—if that—the All-moving, were the One
Reality, and sustained and made all forms,
Then, by the self-same power in man himself
Whatever was real in man might understand
That same Reality, being one substance with it,
One substance with the essential Soul of all,—
Might understand, as children understand,
Even in ignorance, those who love them best;
Might recognise, as through their innocent eyes,
The highest, which is Love, though all the worlds
Of lesser knowledge passed unheeded by.
What meant those moments else? Moments that came
And went on wings, wild as these wings of mine,
The wings of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Quick with a light that never could be reached
By toiling up the mountain-sides of thought;
Consummate meanings that were never found
By adding units; moments of strange awe
When that majestic sequence of events
We call the cosmos, from its wheeling atoms
Up to its wheeling suns, all spoke one Power,
One Presence, One Unknowable, and One Known?

In the beginning, God made heaven and earth:
He, too, believed it, once. . . .

II

THE VOYAGE

As if the wings
Of Shadow-of-a-Leaf had borne me through the West
So that the sunset changed into the dawn,
I saw him in his youth.
The large salt wind,
The creak of cordage, the wild swash of waves
Were round him as he paced the clean white deck,
An odd loose-tweeded sojourner, in a world
Of uniforms and guns.
The *Beagle* plunged
Westward, upon the road that Drake had sailed;
But this new voyager, on a longer quest,
Sailed on a stranger sea; and, though I heard
His ringing laugh, he seemed to live apart
In his own mind, from all who moved around him.

I saw him while the *Beagle* basked at anchor
Under West Indian palms. He lounged there, tanned
With sun; tall, lankier in his cool white drill;
The big slouched straw pulled down to shade his eyes.
The stirring wharf was one bright haze of colour;
Kaleidoscopic flakes, orange and green,
Blood-red and opal, glancing to and fro,
Through purple shadows. The warm air smelt of fruit.

He leaned his elbows on the butt of a gun
And listened, while a red-faced officer, breathing

Faint whiffs of rum, expounded lazily,
With loosely stumbling tongue, the cynic's code,
His easy rule of life, belying the creed
That both professed.
And, in one flash, I caught
A glimpse of something deeper, missed by both,—
The subtle touch of the Master-Ironist
Unfolding his world-drama, point by point,
In every sight and sound and word and thought,
Packed with significance.
Out of its myriad scenes
All moving swiftly on, unguessed by man,
To close in one great climax of clear light,
This vivid moment flashed.
The cynic ceased;
And Darwin, slowly knitting his puzzled brows,
Answered, "*But it is wrong!*"
"Wrong?" chuckled the other. "Why should it be wrong?"
And Darwin, Darwin,—he that was to grasp
The crumbling pillars of their infidel Temple
And bring them headlong down to the honest earth,
Answered again, naïvely as a child,
"*Does not the Bible say so?*"
A broad grin
Wreathed the red face that stared into his own;
And, later, when the wardroom heard the jest,
The same wide grin from Christian mouth to mouth
Spread like the ripples on a single pool,
Quietly enough. They liked him. They'd not hurt him.
And Darwin, strange, observant, simple soul,
Saw clearly enough; had eyes behind his back
For every smile; though in his big slow mind
He now revolved a thought that greatly puzzled him,
A thought that, in their light sophistication,

These humorists had not guessed.
Once, in his cabin,
His red-faced cynic had picked up a book
By one whose life was like a constant light
On the high altar of Truth.
He had read a page,
Then flung it down, with a contemptuous oath,
Muttering, " These damned atheists ! Why d'you read them ? "

Could pagan minds be stirred, then, to such wrath
Because the man they called an " atheist " smiled
At dates assigned by bland ecclesiasts
To God for His creation ?
Man was made
On March the ninth, at ten o'clock in the morning
(A Tuesday), just six thousand years ago :
A legend of a somewhat different cast
From that deep music of the first great phrase
In *Genesis*. The strange irony here struck home.
For Darwin, here, was with the soul-bowed throng
Of prophets, while the ecclesiasts blandly toyed
With little calendars, which his " atheist's book,"
In its irreverence, whispered quite away ;
Whispered (for all such atheists bend their heads
Doubtless in shame) that, in the Book of Earth,
Six thousand years were but as yesterday,
A flying cloud, a shadow, a breaking wave.
Millions of years were written upon the rocks
That told its history. To upheave one range
Of mountains, out of the sea that had submerged
So many a continent, ere mankind was born,
The harnessed forces, governed all by law,
Had laboured, dragging down and building up,
Through distances of Time, unthinkable

As those of starry space.
It dared to say
(This book so empty of mystery and awe !)
That, searching the dark scripture of the rocks,
It found therein no sign of a beginning,
No prospect of an end.
Strange that the Truth,
Whether upheld by the pure law within
Or by the power of reason, thus dismayed
These worshippers of a little man-made code.
Alone there in his cabin, with the books
Of Humboldt, Lyell, Herschel, spread before him,
He made his great decision.
If the realm
Beyond the bounds of human knowledge gave
So large a sanctuary to mortal lies,
Henceforth his Bible should be one inscribed
Directly with the law—the Book of Earth.

III

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS

I saw him climbing like a small dark speck
—Fraught with what vast significance to the world—
Among the snow-capt Andes, a dark point
Of travelling thought, alone upon the heights,
To watch the terrible craters as they breathed
Their smouldering wrath against the sky.
I saw him,
Pausing above Portillo's pass to hear
The sea-like tumult, where brown torrents rolled
Innumerable thousands of rough stones,
Jarring together, and hurrying all one way.
He stood there, spellbound, listening to the voice
Of Time itself, the moments hurrying by
For ever irrecoverably. I heard
His very thought. The stones were on their way
To the ocean that had made them; every note
In their wild music was a prophecy
Of continents unborn.
When he had seen
Those continents in embryo, beds of sand
And shingle, cumulant on the coastwise plains,
Thousands of feet in thickness, he had doubted
Whether the river of time itself could grind
And pile such masses there. But when he heard
The mountain-torrents rattling, he recalled
How races had been born and passed away,
And night and day, through years unreckonable,

These grinding stones had never ceased to roll
On their steep course. Not even the Cordilleras,
Had they been ribbed with adamant, could withstand
That slow sure waste. Even those majestic heights
Would vanish. Nothing—not the wind that blows
Was more unstable than the crust of the earth.

He landed at Valdivia, on the day
When the great earthquake shuddered through the hills
From Valparaiso, southward to Cape Horn.
I saw him wandering through a ruined city
Of Paraguay, and measuring on the coast
The upheaval of new land, discovering rocks
Ten feet above high-water, rocks with shells
For which the dark-eyed panic-stricken throngs
Had dived at ebb, a few short days ago.
I saw him—strange discoverer—as he sailed
Through isles, not only uncharted, but new-born,
Isles newly arisen and glistening in the sun,
And atolls where he thought an older height
Had sunk below the smooth Pacific sea.

He explored the Pampas ; and before him passed
The centuries that had made them ; the great streams
Gathering the red earth at their estuaries
In soft rich deltas, till new plains of loam
Over the Banda granite slowly spread,
And seeds took root and mightier forests towered,
Forests that human foot could never tread,
Forests that human eye could never see ;
But by the all-conquering human mind at last
Trodden and seen, waving their leaves in air
As at an incantation,
And filled once more with monstrous forms of life.

He found their monstrous bones embedded there,
And, as he found them, all those dry bones lived.
I stole beside him in the dark, and heard,
In the unfathomable forest deeps, the crash
Of distant boughs, a wild and lonely sound,
Where Megatherium, the gigantic Sloth
Whose thigh was thrice an elephant's in girth,
Rose, blindly groping, and with armoured hands
Tore down the trees to reach their tender crests
And strip them of their more delicious green.
I saw him pondering on the secret bond
Between the living creatures that he found
On the main coast, and those on lonely isles;
Forms that diverged, and yet were closely akin.
One key, one only, unlocked the mystery there.

Unless God made, for every separate isle
As it arose, new tribes of plants, birds, beasts,
In variant images of the tribes He set
Upon their nearest continent, grading all
By time, and place, and distance from the shore,
The bond between them was the bond of blood.
All, all had branched from one original tree.

I saw him off the Patagonian coast
Staring at something stranger than a dream.
There, on a rocky point above the ship
With its world-voyaging thoughts, he first beheld
Primeval man. There, clustering on the crags,
Backed by their echoing forests of dark beech,
The naked savages yelled at the white sails,
Like wolves that bay the moon. They tossed their arms
Wildly through their long manes of streaming hair,
Like troubled spirits from an alien world.
Whence had they risen? From what ancestral night?

What bond of blood was there? What dreadful Power
Begot them—fallen or risen—from heaven or hell?

I saw him hunting everywhere for light
On life's dark mystery; gathering everywhere
Armies of fact, that pointed all one way,
And yet—what *vera causa* could he find
In blindfold Nature?
Even had he found it,
What æons would be needed! Earth was old;
But could the unresting loom of infinite time
Weave this wild miracle, or evolve one nerve
Of all this intricate network in the brain,
This exquisite machine that looked through heaven,
Revelled in colours of a sunset sky,
Or met love's eyes on earth?
Everywhere, now,
He found new clues that led him all one way.
And, everywhere, in the record of the rocks,
Time and to spare for all that Time could do,
But not his *vera causa*.
Earth grew strange.
Even in the ghostly gleam that told the watch
One daybreak that the ship was nearing home
He saw those endless distances again. . . .
He saw through mist, over the struggling waves
That run between the white-chalk cliffs of France
And England, sundered coasts that once were joined
And clothed with one wide forest.
The deep sea
Had made the strange white body of that broad land,
Beautifully establishing it on death,
Building it, inch by inch, through endless years
Out of innumerable little gleaming bones,
The midget skeletons of the twinkling tribes

That swarmed above in the more lucid green
Ten thousand fathoms nearer to the sun.
There they lived out their gleam of life and died,
Then slowly drifted down into the dark,
And spread in layers upon the cold sea-bed
The invisible grains and flakes that were their bones.
Layer on layer of flakes and grains of lime,
Where life could never build, they built it up
By their incessant death. Though but an inch
In every thousand years, they built it up,
Inch upon inch, age after endless age;
And the dark weight of the incumbent Deep
Compressed them (Power determined by what Will?)
Out of the night that dim creation rose
The seas withdrew. The bright new land appeared.
Then Gaul and Albion, nameless yet, were one;
And the wind brought a myriad wingéd seeds,
And the birds carried them, and the forests grew,
And through their tangled ways the tall elk roared.
But sun and frost and rain, the grinding streams
And rhythmic tides (the tools of what dread Hand?)
Still laboured on; till, after many a change,
The great moon-harnessed energies of the sea
Came swinging back, the way of the south-west wind,
And, æon after æon, hammering there,
Rechannelled through that land their shining way.
There all those little bones now greet the sun
In gleaming cliffs of chalk; and, in their chines
The chattering jackdaw builds, while overhead
On the soft mantle of turf the violet wakes
In March, and young-eyed lovers look for Spring.
What of the Cause? Oh, no more rounded creeds
Framed in a realm where no man could refute them!
Honesty, honesty, honesty, first of all.
And so he turned upon the world around him,

The same grave eyes of deep simplicity
With which he had faced his pagan-christian friends
And quoted them their Bible. . . .
Slowly he marshalled his worldwide hosts of fact,
Legions new-found, or first assembled now,
In their due order. Lyell had not dared
To tell the truth he knew. He found in earth
The records of its vanished worlds of life,
Each with its own strange forms, in its own age,
Sealed in its own rock-system.
In the first,
The rocks congealed from fire, no sign of life;
And, through the rest, in order as they were made,
From oldest up to youngest, first the signs
Of life's first gropings; then, in gathering power,
Strange fishes, lizards, birds, and uncouth beasts,
Worlds of strange life, but all in ordered grades,
World over world, each tombed in its own age
Or merging into the next with subtle changes,
Delicate modulations of one form
(Urged by what force? Impelled by what dark power?)
Progressing upward, into subtler forms
Through all the buried strata, till there came
Forms that still live, still fight for life on earth,
Tiger and wolf and ape; and, last of all,
The form of man; the child of yesterday.
Of yesterday! For none had ever found
Among the myriad forms of older worlds,
Locked in those older rocks through tracts of time
Out-spanning thought, one vestige of mankind.
There was no human footprint on the shores
Whose old compacted sand, now turned to stone,
Still showed the ripples where a summer sea
Once whispered, ere the mastodon was born.
There were the pitted marks, all driven one way,

That showed how raindrops fell, and the west wind
blew.
There on the naked stone remained the tracks
Where first the sea-beasts crawled, out of the sea,
A few salt yards upon the long dark trail
That led through æons to the tidal roar
Of lighted cities and this world of tears.
The shell, the fern, the bird's foot, the beast's claw,
Had left their myriad signs. Their forms remained,
Their delicate whorls, their branching fronds, their bones,
Age after age, like jewels in the rocks;
But, till the dawning of an age so late,
It seemed like yesterday, no sign, no trace,
No relic of mankind!
Then, in that age
Among the skulls, made equal in the grave,
Of ape and wolf, last of them all, looked up
That naked shrine with its receding brows,
And its two sightless holes, the skull of man.
Round it, his tools and weapons, the chipped flints,
The first beginnings of his fight for power,
The first results of his first groping thought
Proclaimed his birth, the youngest child of time.
Born, and not made? Born—of what lesser life?
Was man so arrogant that he could disdain
The words he used so glibly of his God—
Born, and not made?
Could Lyell, who believed
That, in the world around us, we should find
The self-same causes and the self-same laws
To-day as yesterday; and throughout all time;
And that the Power behind all changes works
By law alone; law that includes all heights,
All depths, of reason, harmony, and love;
Could Lyell hold that all those realms of life,

Each sealed apart in its own separate age,
With its own separate species, had been called
Suddenly, by a special Act of God,
Out of the void and formless? Could he think
Even that mankind, this last emergent form,
After so many æons of ordered law,
Was by miraculous Hands in one wild hour,
Suddenly kneaded out of the formless clay?
And was the formless clay more noble, then,
Than this that breathed, this that had eyes to see,
This whose dark heart could beat, this that could die?
No! Lyell knew that this wild house of flesh
Was never made by hands, not even those Hands;
And that to think so were to discrown God,
And not to crown Him, as the blind believed.
The miracle was a vaster than they knew.
The law by which He worked was all unknown;
Subtler than music, quieter than light,
The mighty process that through countless changes,
Delicate grades and tones and semi-tones,
Out of the formless slowly brought forth forms,
Lifeless as crystals, or translucent globes
Drifting in water; till, through endless years,
Out of their myriad changes, one or two
More subtle in combination, at the touch
Of light began to move, began to attract
Substances that could feed them; blindly at first;
But as an artist, with all heaven for prize,
Pores over every syllable, tests each thread
Of his most tenuous thought, the moving Power
Spent endless æons of that which men call Time,
To form one floating tendril that could close
On what it touched.
Who whispered in his ear
That fleeting thought?

We must suppose a Power
Intently watching—through all the universe—
Each slightest variant, seizing on the best,
Selecting them, as men by conscious choice
In their small realm selected and reshaped
Their birds and flowers.
We must suppose a Power
In that immense night-cleaving pageantry
Which men call Nature, a selective Power,
Choosing through æons as men choose through years.

Many are called, few chosen, quietly breathed
Shadow-of-a-Leaf, in exquisite undertone
One phrase of the secret music. . . .
He did not hear.
Lamarck—all too impatiently he flung
Lamarck aside; forgetting how in days
When the dark Book of Earth was darker yet
Lamarck had spelled gigantic secrets out,
And left an easier task for the age to come;
Forgetting more than this; for Darwin's mind,
Working at ease in Nature, lost its way
In history, and the thoughts of other men.
For him Lamarck had failed, and he misread
His own forerunner's mind. Blindfold desires
Had never shaped a wing. The grape-vine's need
To cling and climb could thrust no tendrils out.
The environing snows of Greenland could not cloak
Its little foxes with their whiter fur.
Nor could the wing-shut butterfly's inner will
Mimic the shrivelled leaf on the withered bough
So cunningly that the bird might perch beside it
And never see its prey.
Was it blind chance
That flashed his own great fragment of the truth

Into his mind? What *vera causa*, then,
What leap of Nature brought that truth to birth,
Illumining all the world?
It flashed upon him
As at a sudden contact of two wires
The current flashes through; or, when through space,
A meteorite for endless ages rolls
In darkness, and its world of night appears
Unchangeable for ever, till, all at once,
It plunges into a soft resisting sea
Of planet-girdling air, and burns with heat,
And bursts into a blaze, while far below,
Two lovers, in a world beyond its ken,
Look from a little window into the night
And see a falling star.
By such wild light,
An image of his own ambiguous "chance,"
Which was not "chance," but governed by a law
Unknown, too vast for men to comprehend
(Too vast for any to comprehend but One,
Breathed Shadow-of-a-Leaf, who in each part discerns
Its harmony with the whole), at last the clue
Flashed on him. . . .
In the strange ironical scheme
Wherein he moved, of the Master-Dramatist,
It was his own ambiguous "chance" that slipt
A book of Malthus into his drowsy hand
And drew his drowsy eyes down to that law
Of struggling men and nations.
Was it "chance"
That in this intricate torch-race tossed him there
Light from one struggling on an alien track
And yet not alien, since all roads to truth
Meet in one goal at last?
Was it blind chance

That even in this triumphant flash prepared
The downfall of his human pride, and slipt
The self-same volume into another hand;
And, in the lonely islands of Malay,
Drew Wallace to the self-same page, and said
—Though only Shadow-of-a-Leaf could hear that voice,-
Whose is the kingdom, whose the glory and power?

Oh, exquisite irony of the Master, there
Unseen by both, their generous rivalry
Evolved, perfected, the new thought for man;
And, over both, and all their thoughts, a Power
Intently watching, made of their struggle for truth
An image of the law that they illumed.

So all that wasting of a myriad seeds
In Nature's wild profusion was not waste,
Not even such waste as drives the flying grains
Under the sculptor's chisel, but was itself
A cause of that unending struggle of life
Through which all life ascends.
The conqueror there
Was chosen by laws inexorably precise,
As though to infinite Reason infinite Art
Were wedded, and had found in infinite "chance"
Full scope for their consummate certainties,—
Choice and caprice, freedom and law in one.
Each slightest variant, in a myriad ways,
That armed or shielded or could help its kind,
Would lead to a new triumph; would reveal,
In varying, subtler ways of varying still;
New strokes of that divinest "chance" of all
Which poet and sculptor count as unforeseen,
And unforeseeable; yet, when once achieved,
They recognise as crowning law with law,

And witnessing to infinitudes of Power
In that creative Will which shapes the world.
Oh, in that widening splendour of the mind,
Blinder than Buffon, blinder than Lamarck,
His eyes amazed with all that leapt to light,
Dazed with a myriad details, lost the whole.
He saw the law whereby the few were chosen
From forms already at variance. Back and back
He traced his law, and every step was true.
And yet his *vera causa* was no Cause,
For it determined nothing. It revealed,
In part, how subtler variants had arisen
From earlier simpler variants, but no more.

* * * * *

Subtler than music, quieter than light,
The Power that wrought those changes; and the last
Were all implied and folded in the first,
As the gnarled oak-tree with its thousand boughs
Writhing to heaven and striking its grim roots
Like monstrous talons into the mountain's heart
Is pent in one smooth acorn. So each life,
In little, retold the tale; each separate man
Was, in himself, the world's epitome,
A microcosm, wherein who runs may read
The history of the whole; from the first seed
Enclosed in the blind womb, until life wake
Through moons or æons of embryonic change
To human thought and love, and those desires
Which still grope upward, into the unknown realms
As far beyond us now as Europe lay
From the first life that crawled out of the sea.

There lies our hope; but Oh, the endless way!
And the lost road of knowledge, endless, too!
That infinite hope was not for him. One life

Hardly sufficed for his appointed task,
To find on earth his clues to the unknown law,
Out-miracling all miracles had he known,
Whereby this lifeless earth, so clearly seen
Across the abyss of time, this lifeless earth
Washed by a lifeless ocean, by no power
But that which moves within the things we see,
Swept the blind rocks into the cities of men,
With great cathedrals towering to the sky,
And little ant-like swarms in their dark aisles
Kneeling to that Unknowable.
His to trace
The way by inches, never to see the whole,
Never to grasp the miracle in the law,
And wrestling with it, to be writhen by light
As by an Angel's finger in the dark.
Could he have stood on that first lifeless coast
With Shadow-of-a-Leaf, and seen that lifeless brine,
Rocks where no mollusc clung, nor seaweed grew;
Could he have heard a whisper,—*Only wait.*
Be patient. On one sure and certain day,
Out of the natural changes of these rocks
And seas, at last, a great ship will go by;
Cities will dusk that heaven; and you shall see
Two lovers pass, reading one printed book,
The Paradiso. . . .
Would he have been so sure
That Nature had no miracles in her heart
More inconceivably shattering to the mind
Than madness ever dreamed? For this, this, this,
Had happened, though the part obscured the whole;
And his own labour, in a myriad ways,
Endlessly linking part to part, had lost
The *vera causa* that Lamarck had known,
The one determining Cause that moved through all.

IV

THE PROTAGONISTS

THE mist cleared. As an airman flying, I saw,
Between the quiet wings of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Far down, a coiling glitter of willowy streams;
Then grey remembered battlements that enclosed
Gardens, like nests of nightingales; a bridge;
An airy tower; a shadowy dome; the High;
St. Mary's delicate spire.
A sound of bells
Rose like a spray of melody from the far
Diminished fountains of the City of Youth.
I heard and almost wept.
The walls grew large
And soared to meet me. As the patterned streets
Break into new dimensions, passing from sight
While the airman glides and circles down, they rose,
And the outer City, vanishing, revealed
The secret life within. At once I passed
Through walls of stone on those ethereal wings;
And, as an unseen spirit might survey
A crowded theatre from above, I saw
A packed assembly, gazing, hushed and still,
At certain famous leaders of that hour
On their raised daïs. Henslow in the midst,
Their president, gentle, tolerant, reverent, kind,
Darwin's old tutor, scientist and half-saint;
Owen beside him, crabbéd as John Knox,
And dry as his dead bones; bland Wilberforce,

The great smooth Bishop of Oxford, pledged and primed
To make an end of Darwin, once for all.
Not far away, a little in shadow, sat
A strange young man, tall, slight, with keen dark eyes,
Who might, in the irresponsible way of youth,
Defend an absent thinker. Let him beware.
There was a balance of power in science, too,
Which would resent disturbance. He'd be crushed
By sheer weight of authority, then set,
Duly submissive, in his proper place.
His name was Huxley.
A square close-crowded room,
It held, in little, a concentrated world,
Imaging, on a microcosmic stage,
The doubts, the fears, the jealousies, and dull hates
That now beset one lonely soul at Down ;
But imaging, also, dauntless love of truth
In two or three, the bearers of the fire.

Henslow, subdued, with twenty reticent words
That, in their mere formality, seemed aware
Of silent dark momentous currents flowing
Under the trivial ripple of use and wont,
Called on Daubeny, first, for his discourse
On Sex in Flowers, and their descent through time.

Daubeny, glancing over his glasses, bowed
And twinkled a wise physician's rosy smile,
As one of his many parts ; an all-round man,
Sound Latinist and an excellent judge of wine,
Humanist and geologist, who had tracked
Guettard through all his craters in Auvergne,
And, afterwards, with a map in his right hand,
And Ovid, or Catullus, in his left,
Traced the volcanic chains through Hungary,

Italy, Transylvania, and returned
To Oxford, as her botanist at the last,
With silvery hair, but otherwise unchanged,
Oxford in bloom and Oxford to the core.
Swimming serene in academic air,
With open mind and non-committal phrase
He proved he knew how little all men know ;
And whoso kept that little to himself
Could never be caught tripping.
Then he smiled,
And so remained the wisest of them all.

For half an hour the sexes of the flowers
Danced from his learned discourse, through the minds
Of half his feminine hearers, like a troop
Of Bacchanals, blowing kisses.
In the crowd
I saw, at the whimsical chuckle of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
The large-eyed spinster with the small pursed mouth,
Eliza Pym of Woodstock, who desired
To know about the wild flowers that she drew
In delicate water-colours for her friends.
She sat bolt upright, innocently amazed
And vaguely trepidant in her hooped green gown.
What ? Even the flowers ? How startling was the sound
Of pistil ! Awed, intent, she caught at clues ;
Meticulously quivering at the thought
Of bees ; and blushing deeply when he spoke
In baritone of male virtue in the rose.
Through all, the evasive academic phrase,
Putting out vaguely sensitive tentacles
That instantly withdrew from what they touched,
Implied that he could view, quite unperturbed,
All theories, and remain detached, aloft
Among the gods, in philosophic calm :

Nay, by his critical logic was endowed
With something loftier.
What were gods to him
Who, being ephemeral, mortal, born to die,
Could, over the port of Corpus and All Souls
Mellowed in classic cellars, quiz the powers
That doomed him, as the aristocrat of thought
Looks through ironical lorgnettes at the might
Of Demos round his tumbril. They lived on,
Wasting their nectar, wrecking worlds on worlds.
He had risen, at least, superior to all that.
He held it somewhat barbarous, vulgar, crude
To wallow in such profusion as the gods.
All this implied, not spoken; for he found
His final causes in his dry pressed flowers;
Proved that he knew—none better—all the tribe
Who had dragged a net of Latin through the fields;
Proved that some flowers, at least, had never changed
Through many centuries. The black-seeded poppy
Was known to Homer. He rolled out the lines.
Almonds, the bitter-kernelled and the sweet,
Were tasted by the prophets; and he found
White-seeded sesamum, in the night of time,
Among the old Egyptians. . . .
He showed that, while his library was vast,
Fragrant with leather, crested, tooled, and gilt,
He had closed the Book of Nature, and, on the whole,
Despite his open mind, dismissed the views
Of this—er—new philosopher, with a smile
That, don-wise, almost seemed to ask aloud,
"Who is he, after all?" Not one of *us*.
Why weigh his facts, then, further, since we hold
The official seals of truth in this our time.
Such men are always wrong. They come and go.
The breeze would soon blow over.

All this implied,
Not spoken, in that small dry steady smile,
Doctor Daubeny gathered up his tails
And made one definite and emphatic point
By sitting down, while some eight hundred hands
Acclaimed his perfect don-hood.
Henslow rose,
A little nervously. Had much pleasure, though . . .
And turned to Mr. Huxley. Would he speak?
A whisper passed, a queer new stillness gripped
The expectant crowd. The clock ticked audibly
Not yet, not yet! A sense of change at hand
Stole through the silence, like the first cool breath
That, over a great ship's company at night,
Steals through the port-holes from the open sea.
Then, with sure foresight, seeing the clash to come,
The strange young man with the determined mouth
And quick dark eyes rose grimly, and flung down
A single sentence, like a gyve of steel
Wrenched from the wrists to set the strong hands free
For whatsoever need might rise, if clock
And *Zeitgeist* changed their quiet *Not Yet* to *Now.*
" *A general audience, sir, where sentiment*
May interfere, unduly interfere,
With intellect "—as a thin steel wire drawn tight
By an iron winch, the hush grew tense and rang
Low, hard, clear, cold—" *is not a fitting place*
For this discussion."
Silence, and the clock,
Two great allies, the surest of them all,
Dead silence, and the voice *Not Yet, Not Yet,*
A cough, the creak of the chair as he sat down,
A shuffle of feet, the chairman's baffled face,
Then little indignant mutterings round the hall,
Turning to gasps of mockery. Insolence?—no,—

Sheer weakness, full retreat !
The Bishop raised
His eyebrows, looked at the dense disflattered crowd,
And had no further fear. The battle was won.
Victory, of the only kind he knew,
Was in his hands. Retreat must now be turned
Into full rout. He glanced at Owen, met
His little sardonic smile with a wise nod,
As if to say, " Ah, just as we foresaw."
Excited clerics caught the flying hint
And whispered, eyes agog, " You noticed that ?
He's a great man, the Bishop ! What a brow !
And Owen, too. Of course, they know; they know;
And understand each other, thick as thieves."
Then Owen rose; waved Huxley's empty excuse
Remorselessly aside; and plunged right on,
Declaring there were facts, whereby the crowd
Could very fitly judge.
The crowd's own feet
Tapped a benign applause.
Then came the facts,
Facts from a realm that Huxley had made his own.
The brain of the gorilla—someone turned
A faint hysterical laugh into a sneeze—
Linked it more closely to the lowest groups
Of QUADRUMANA.
" Quadru—what-did-he-say ? "
Whispered Miss Pym unconsciously to herself,
" Mana, four-handed," clerical whiskers breathed,
With Evangelical titillance in her ear,
" Apes, monkeys, all the things that climb up trees.
Says the gorilla's more like them than us."
" Thank you." Eliza Pym inclined her head
A little stiffly.

Had the world gone mad?
Was some one in the background trying to find
A pedigree for mankind among the brutes?
Absurd, of course, and yet—one must confess
How like they were in some things. Unto each
A mouth, a nose, two eyes, flesh, blood, and bones
Of the same pattern.
Comic enough, and weird;
But what became of *Genesis*, then, and God?
If all these whiskered men but one or two
So utterly disbelieved it, why discuss
Degrees of kinship? Surely the gulf was fixed
Wide as the severance between heaven and hell.
Then, in one dreadful gleam, she seemed to see
The rows of whiskered listeners, darkly perched,
Herself among them, on long swaying boughs,
Mesmerised, and all dumbly staring down
With horrible fascination at great eyes,
Green moons of cruelty, steadily smouldering,
In depths that—smelt of tigers; or the salts
Unstoppered by the vicar's wife in front.

Smile at Eliza Pym with Shadow-of-a-Leaf;
But only if your inward sight can see
Her memories, too—a child's uplifted face,
The clean white cot, the fluttering nursery fire;
Old days, old faces, teaching her those lines
From Blake, about a Lamb. Yet that—why that
Might be the clue they lacked in all this talk
Of our dumb kinsfolk. If she could but speak
And—hint it! Why don't Bishops think of things
Like that, she wondered.
Owen resumed his chair
With loud applause.

That grim young man again,
Huxley, was on his feet, his dark eyes lit
With thrice the vital power of all the rest.
In one cool sentence, like a shining lance,
He touched the centre of his opponent's shield,
And ended all the shuffling, all the doubts
Of where he stood, how far he dared to go,
If truth required it. He could not accept
Those facts from any authority; gave direct
Unqualified contradiction to those facts;
And pledged himself to justify this course,
Unusual as it seemed perhaps—elsewhere.
" Elsewhere," and as he said it, came a gleam
Into his face, reflected from the heights
Where a tribunal sits whose judgment holds
Not for the fleeting moment, but all time.

" Elsewhere "—the Bishop smiled. He had not caught
That gleam. " Elsewhere " was only another sign
Of weakness, even timidity perhaps,
And certainly retreat, not from the truth
(He felt so sure of that) but from the might
And deep resources of the established powers
Whose influence ruled the world.
" Elsewhere " for him
Meant Saturday, and here. The lists were set,
The battle joined, and the great issue plain,—
Whether the human race came straight from God,
Or traced its dark descent back to the brute,
And left his creed a wreck of hollow towers,
The haunt of bats and owls. His time to strike
Would come on Saturday. Pleadings of " elsewhere "
Would not avail. He set his jaw. Please God,
He meant to drive this victory crashing home,
And make an end of Darwin once for all.

So closed the first strange scene.
The rumour spread
Everywhere, of the Bishop's grim intent.
Saturday's crowd, an hour before its time
Choked all the doors, and crammed the long west hall.
Black-coated members of all shades of thought,
Knowledge and doubt and bigotry, crushed their sides
In chair-packed rows together (Eliza Pym
Among them, with her startled innocent eyes).
A bevy of undergraduates at the back,
Quietly thoughtful, held their watching brief
For youth and for the future. Fame to come
Already touched the brows of a rare few
With faint leaf-shadows of her invisible wreath:
Green, the philosopher, gazing at the world
With youth's aloofness, and that inward light
Which shines from Oxford still; not far away
The young historian of the coloured stream
Of outward life, the ancestral pageantry
Of England, and its tributary rills
Flowing in dawn-gleams out of the mists of time.
There, too, in front, with atavistic face
And Van Dyck beard, so oddly like King Charles
And proud of it, sat Admiral FitzRoy,
Late captain of the *Beagle*, quite prick-eared
With personal curiosity. Twice he told
His neighbour that, by George, he wouldn't ha' missed
This Donnybrook Fair for anything. He had sailed
With Darwin round the world. They used to call him
The old philosopher. Heard the bosun once,
Pointing the officers out—damned funny it was!—
"That's Captain FitzRoy. That's the second mate;
And *that*"—pointing a thumb at Darwin's back—
"*That's* our Fly-Catcher!"
Best of fellows, too,

But queer. He'd tell you, in the simplest way
—As if it meant no more than pass the salt,—
Something that knocked you endways; calmly shift
A mountain-range, in half a dozen words,
And sink it in the sea.
In fact, FitzRoy
Felt it his duty more than once, by George,
To expostulate; told him plainly he'd upset
Genesis and the Church; and then there'd be
The devil and all to pay. And now, by George,
He'd done it; and her Majesty's Admiral
Had come on purpose, all the way from town,
To hear and see the end of it.
So he said,
Not wholly understanding why he came,—
The memory of a figure rapt and bowed
Over a shell, or finding in the rocks,
As though by wizardry, relics of lost worlds;
Moments that, by a hardly noticed phrase,
Had touched with orderly meaning and new light
The giant flaws and foldings in the hills;
Moments when, in the cabin, he had stared
Into the " old philosopher's " microscope,
And seen the invisible speck in a water-drop
Grow to a great rose-window of radiant life
In an immense cathedral.
Vaguely enough,
Perhaps in the dimmest hinterland of his mind,
There lurked a quiet suspicion that, after all,
His queer old friend *had* hit on something queer.
Three places off, his face a twinkling mask
Of keen Scots humour, Robert Chambers glanced
Quietly at his watch, to hide a smile
When someone who had " written the Vestiges,"
And only half denied it, met his eye.

The vacant platform glared expectancy,
And held the gaze now of the impatient crowd.

Then Henslow led the conquering Bishop in.
Two rows of clerics, half-way down the hall,
Drummed for their doughty champion with their heels.
Above, in each recessed high window-seat,
Bishop-adoring ladies clapped their hands.

The rest filed in, mere adjuncts, modest foils.
Hooker and Lubbock and Huxley took their chairs
On Henslow's left. The beautiful gaitered legs,
By their divine prerogative, on his right,
So carelessly crossed, more eloquently than words
Assured the world that everything was well,
And their translation into forms of speech
A mere formality. Next to the Bishop sat
A Transatlantic visitor with a twang,
One Doctor Draper, his hard wrinkled skin
Tinged by the infinite coffee he absorbed,
A gaunt bone-coloured desert, unassuaged.
He was a grim diplomatist, as befits
A pilgrim of the cosmos ; ready at Rome
To tickle the Romans ; and, if bishops ruled,
And found themselves at odds with freeborn souls
Outside the Land of Freedom, he'd befriend
Bishops, bring in the New World, stars and all,
To rectify that balance, and take home
For souvenir, with a chip of the pyramids,
The last odd homages of the obsequious Old.

The president called him for his opening speech.
He stood and beamed, enjoying to the full
The sense that, with his mighty manuscript,
He could delay the antagonists for an hour.

He cleared his throat. He took from a little box
A small black lozenge, popped it into his mouth,
Leisurely rolled it under a ruminant tongue,
Then placidly drawled his most momentous words:
" *Proh-fessur Henslow, Bishop Wilbur-force,*
Members, AND *friends, in this historic hall,*
I assk first, AIR *we a fortooitous*
Con-course of atoms? " Half unconsciously,
He struck at once to the single central heart
Of all the questions asked by every age;
As though he saw what only Shadow-of-a-Leaf
Had watched last night, as in a crystal globe,
That scene preparing, the interweaving clues
Whose inconceivable intricacy at length,
By " chance," as blind men call it, through the maze
Of life and time, at the one right juncture brought
Two shadows, face to face, in an Oxford Street,
Chambers and Huxley. " You'll be there to-morrow."-
" No, I leave Oxford now."—
" The enemy means
To annihilate Darwin. You will not desert us? "—
" If you say that, I stay."
Each to his place
Had moved in his own orbit, like a star,
Or like an atom, free-will at one with law,
In the unplanned plan of the Master-Dramatist,
Where Doctor Draper blindly played his part
And asked his pregnant question. He droned on,
For one enormous hour, starkly maintained
That Europe, in its intellectual life,
By mere " fortooity," never could have flowered
To such results as blushed before him there
In that historic hall of halls to-night.
If Darwin thought so, he took leave to stand
Beside them, and to smile the vast calm smile

Of Arizona's desert distances,
Till all such dragon thoughts had coiled away.
He took his chair. The great debate began.
For prelude came a menacing growl of storm.
A furious figure rose, like a sperm-whale,
Out of the seething audience. A huge man,
With small, hot, wicked eyes and cavernous mouth,
Bellowed his own ferocious claim to speak
On economic grounds. He had subscribed
His guineas, ringing guineas of red gold,
Ungrudgingly for years; but prophesied
Withdrawal of all such guineas, on all sides,
From this Association, if it failed
To brand these most abominable views
As blasphemous, bearing on their devilish brows,
Between their horns, the birth-mark of the Beast.
This last word hissed, he sank again. At once,
Ere Henslow found his feet or spoke a word,
Up leapt a raw-boned parson from the North,
To seize his moment's fame. With sawing arm
The Reverend Dingle, like a windmill, vowed
He'd prove upon the blackboard, in white chalk,
By diagram—and the chalk was in his hand—
" That mawnkey and mahn had separate pedigrees.
Let A here be the mawnkey, and B the mahn."
Loud laughter; shouts of " mawnkey ! " and " sit down "
Extinguished him. He sat; and Henslow quelled
The hubbub with one clarion-clear demand,
Dictated, surely, by the ironic powers
Who had primed the Bishop and prepared his fall:
" *Gentlemen, this discussion now must rest*
On scientific grounds."
At once there came
Calls for the Bishop, who, rising from his chair,
Urged by the same invisible ironies,

Remarked that his old friend, Professor Beale,
Had something to say *first*. That weighty first
Conveyed the weight of his own words to come.
Urged still by those invisible ones, his friend
Dug the pit deeper; modestly declared,
Despite his keen worn face and shoulders bowed
In histologic vigils, that he felt
His knowledge quite inadequate; and the way
Was made straight—for the Bishop.
The Bishop rose, mellifluous, bland, adroit.

A gesture, lacking only the lawn sleeves
To make it perfect, delicately conveyed
His comfortable thought—that what amazed
The sheepfold must be folly.
Half the throng,
His own experience told him, had not grasped
The world-inweaving argument, could not think
In æons. Æons, then, would be dismissed
As vague and airy fantasies. He might choose
His facts at will, unchallenged. He stood there
Secure that his traditions could not fail,
Basing his faith on schemes of thought designed
By authorised " thinkers " in pure artistry,
As free from Nature's law as coloured blocks
That children play with on the nursery hearth,
And puzzle about and shift and twist and turn
Until the beautiful picture, as ordained,
Comes out, exact to the pattern, and reveals
The artificer's plan, the pattern, as arranged,
By bishops, politic statesmen, teachers, guides,
Who hold it in reserve, their final test
Of truth, for times like this. He had been so sure
Of something deeper than all schemes of thought
That he had all too lightly primed himself

With " facts " to match their fables ; hastily crammed
Into his mind's convenient travelling bag
(Sound leather, British) all that he required,—
Not truth, but " a good argument." He had asked
Owen, who hated Huxley, to provide it ;
And he had brought it with him,—not the truth,
Not even facts, those unrelated crumbs
Of truth, the abiding consecrated whole.
He had brought his borrowed " facts," misunderstood,
To meet, for the first time in all his life,
Stark earnest thought, wrestling for truth alone,
As men on earth discerned it. He had prayed,
With something deeper than blind make-believe,
Thy will be done on earth ; and yet, and yet,
The law wherein that will might be discerned,
The law wherein that unity of heaven
And earth might yet be found (could he but trust
The truth, could he believe that his own God
Lived in the living truth), he waved aside.
These others had not found it, but they kept
One faith that he had lost. Though it should slay them,
They trusted in the truth. They could not see
Where it might lead them. Only at times they felt
As they deciphered the dark Book of Earth
That, following its majestic rhythm of law,
They followed the true path, the eternal way
Of That which reigns. Prophetic flashes came.
Words that the priest mechanically intoned
Burned upon Huxley's keen ironical page
Like sudden sapphires, drawing their deeper light
From that celestial City which endures
Because it hath foundations : *Shall I come*
Before the Eternal with burnt offerings ?
Hath not the Eternal showed thee what is good,

That thou do justly and mercifully, and walk
Humbly with the Eternal?

Oh, irony of the Master-Dramatist,
Who set once more those lists; and sent His truth
Unrecognised, as of old, to fight for life
And prove itself in struggle and raise once more
A nobler world above the world out-worn,
Crushing all easy sophistry, though it stood
Garbed as the priest of God.
The Bishop seized
His diplomatic vantage. The blunt truth
Of Huxley's warning offered itself to him
As a rash gambit in their game of—tact.
He seized it; gracefully smoothed the ruffled pride
Of that great audience, trained in a sound school
To judge by common-sense.
His mobile face
Revealed much that his politic words concealed.
His strength was in that sound old British way—
Derision of all things that transcend its codes
In life, thought, art; the moon-calf's happy creed
That, if a moon-calf only sees the moon
In thoughts that range the cosmos, his broad grin
Sums the whole question; there's no more to see.
In all these aids, an innocent infidel,
The Bishop put his trust; and, more than all,
In vanity, the vacant self-conceit
That, when it meets the masters of the mind
And finds them bowed before the Inscrutable Power,
Accepts their reverence and humility
As tribute, due acknowledgment of fool's right
To give the final judgment, and annul
The labour of a life-time in an hour.
Dulcetly, first, he scoffed at Darwin's facts.

" Rock-pigeons now were what they had always been.
Species had never changed. What were the proofs
Even of the variation they required
To make this theory possible? We had heard
Mysterious rumours of a long-legged sheep
Somewhere in Yorkshire (laughter). Let me ask
Professor Huxley, here upon the left
(All eyes on Huxley), who believes himself
Descended from an ape (chuckles of glee),
How recently this happened."
The Bishop turned,
All smiling insolence, " May I beg to know
If this descent is on your father's side,
Or on your mother's? "
He paused, to let the crowd
Bellow its laughter. The unseen ironies
Had trapped him and his flock; and neither knew.
But Huxley knew. He turned, with a grim smile,
And while the opposing triumph rocked and pealed,
Struck one decisive palm upon his knee,
And muttered low—" *The Lord hath delivered him*
Into my hands."
His neighbour stared and thought
His wits were wandering. Yet that undertone
Sounded more deadly, had more victory in it,
Than all the loud-mouthed minute's dying roar.

It died to a tense hush. The Bishop closed
In solemn diapason. Darwin's views
Degraded woman. They debased mankind,
And contradicted God's most Holy Word.
Applause! Applause! The hall a quivering mist
Of clapping hands. From every window-seat
A flutter of ladies' handkerchiefs and shrill cries
As of white swarming sea-gulls. The black rows

Of clerics all exchanging red-faced nods,
And drumming with their feet, as though to fill
A hundred-pedalled organ with fresh wind.
The Bishop, like a *Gloire de Dijon* rose
With many-petalled smiles, his plump right hand
Clasped in a firm congratulatory grip
Of hickory-bones by Draper of New York;
Who had small faith in what the Bishop said
But heard the cheers, and gripped him as a man
Who never means to let this good thing go.
Motionless, on the left, the observant few,
The silent delegates of a sterner power,
With grave set faces, quietly looking on.
At last the tumult, as all tumult must,
Sank back to that deep silence. Henslow turned
To Huxley without speaking. Once again
The clock ticked audibly, but its old "Not Yet"
Had somehow, in that uproar, in the face
Of that tumultuous mockery, changed to *Now!*

The lean tall figure of Huxley quietly rose.
He looked, for a moment, thoughtfully, at the crowd;
Saw rows of hostile faces; caught the grin
Of ignorant curiosity; here and there,
A hopeful gleam of friendship; and, far back,
The young, swift-footed, waiting for the fire.
He fixed his eyes on these—then, in low tones,
Clear, cool, incisive, "*I have come here*," he said,
"*In the cause of Science only.*"
He paused again.
Then, striking the mockery out of the mocker's face,
His voice rang out like steel—
"I have heard nothing
To prejudice the case of my august
Client, who, as I told you, is not here."

At once a threefold picture flashed upon me,
A glimpse, far off, through eyes of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
First, of a human seeker, there at Down,
Gathering his endless cloud of witnesses
From rocks, from stones, from trees; and from the signs
In man's own body of life's æonian way;
But, far above him, clothed with purer light,
The stern, majestic Spirit of living Truth;
And, more august than even his prophets knew,
Through that eternal Spirit, the primal Power
Returning into a world of faiths out-worn.

Once more, as he spoke on, a thousand years
Were but as yesterday. If these truths were true,
This theory flooded the whole world with light.
Could we believe that the Creator set
In mockery all these birth-signs in the world,
Or once in a million years had wrecked His work
And shaped, in a flash, a myriad lives anew,
Bearing in their own bodies all the signs
Of their descent from those that He destroyed?
Who left that ancient leaf within the flower?
Who hid within the reptile those lost fins,
And under the skin of the sea-floundering whale
The bones of the lost thigh? Who dusked the foal
With shadowy stripes, and under its hoof concealed
Those ancient birdlike feet of its lost kin?
Who matched that hoof with a rosy finger-nail,
Or furled that point within the human ear?
Who had imprinted in the body of man,
And in his embryo, all those intricate signs
Of his forgotten lineage, even those gills
Through which he drew his breath once in the sea?

The speaker glanced at his antagonist.
"You think all this too marvellous to be true;

Yet you believe in miracles. You think
The unfolding of this complicated life
Around us, out of a simple primal form,
Impossible; yet you know that every man
Before his birth, a few brief years ago,
Was once no more than a single living cell.
You think it ends your theory of creation.
You say that God made *you;* and yet you know
—And reconcile your creed with what you know—
That you yourself originally "—he held up
A gleaming pencil-case—" were a little piece
Of matter, not so large as the end of this.
But if you ask, in fine,
Whether I'd be ashamed to claim descent
From that poor animal with the stooping gait
And low intelligence, who can only grin
And chatter as we pass by, or from a *man*
Who could use high position and great gifts
To crush one humble seeker after truth—
I hesitate, but "—an outburst of applause
From all who understood him drowned the words.
He paused. The clock ticked audibly again.
Then, quietly measuring every word, he drove
The sentence home. "I asserted and repeat
A man would have no cause to feel ashamed
Of being descended through vast tracts of time
From that poor ape.
Were there an ancestor
Whom I could not recall without a sense
Of shame, it were a *man*, so placed, so gifted,
Who sought to sway his hearers from the truth
By aimless eloquence and by skilled appeals
To their religious prejudice."
Was it the truth
That conquered, or the blind sense of the blow

Justly considered, delivered, and driven home,
That brought a crash of applause from half the house?
And more (for even the outright enemy
Joined in that hubbub), though indignant cries,
Protested vainly, "Abominable to treat
The Bishop so!"
The Bishop sat there dumb.
Eliza Pym, adding her own quaint touch
Of comedy, saw that pencil shine again
In Huxley's hand; compared it, at a glance
Of fawn-like eyes, with the portentous form
In gaiters; felt the whole world growing strange;
Drew one hysterical breath, and swooned away.

V

THE *VERA CAUSA*

AND yet, and yet, the victor knew too well
His victory had a relish of the dust.
Even while the plaudits echoed in his ears,
It troubled him. When he pondered it that night,
A finer shame had touched him. He had used
The weapons of his enemy at the last;
And, if he had struck his enemy down for truth,
He had struck him down with weapons he despised.
He had used them with a swifter hand and eye,
A subtler cunning; and he had set his heel
On those who took too simply to their hearts
A tale, whose ancient imagery enshrined
A mystery that endured. He had proclaimed
A fragment of a truth which, he knew well,
Left the true Cause in darkness. Did he know
More of that Cause than *Genesis?* Could he see
Farther into that darkness than the child
Folding its hands in prayer?
More clearly far
Than Darwin, whom he had warned of it, he knew
The bounds of this new law; bade him beware
Of his repeated dogma—*Nature makes*
No leap. He pointed always to the abyss
Of darkness round the flickering spark of light
Upheld by Science. Had Wilberforce been armed
With knowledge and the spiritual steel
Of Saint Augustine, who had also seen,

Even in his age, a ladder of life to heaven,
There had been a victory of another kind
To lighten through the world.
And Darwin knew it ;
But, while he marshalled his unnumbered truths,
He lost the Truth ; as one who takes command
Of multitudinous armies in the night,
And strives to envisage, in one sweep of the mind,
Each squadron and each regiment of the whole,
Ever the host that swept through his mind's eye,
Though all in ordered ranks and files, obscured
Army on army the infinite truth beyond.
The gates of Beauty closed against his mind,
And barred him out from that eternal realm,
Whose lucid harmonies on our night bestow
Glimpses of absolute knowledge from above ;
Unravelling and ennobling, making clear
Much that had baffled us, much that else was dark ;
So that the laws of Nature shine like roads,
Firm roads that lead through a significant world
Not downward, from the greater to the less,
But up to the consummate Soul of all.
He could not follow them now. Back, back and back,
He groped along the dark diminishing road.
The ecstasy of music died away.
The poet's vision melted into a dream.
He knew his loss, and mourned it ; but it marred
Not only his own happiness, as he thought.
It blurred his vision, even of his own truths.

He looked long at the butterfly's radiant wings,
Pondered their blaze of colour, and believed
That butterfly wooers choosing their bright mates
Through centuries of attraction and desire
Evolved this loveliness. For he only saw

The blaze of colour, the flash that lured the eye.
He did not see the exquisite pattern there,
The diamonded fans of the under-wing,
Inlaid with intricate harmonies of design ;
The delicate little octagons of pearl,
The moons like infinitesimal fairy flowers,
The lozenges of gold, and grey, and blue
All ordered in an intellectual scheme,
Where form to form responded and faint lights
Echoed faint lights, and shadowy fringes ran
Like elfin curtains on a silvery thread,
Shadow replying to shadow through the whole.

Did eyes of the butterfly wooer mark all this,—
A subtlety too fine for half mankind ?
He tossed a shred of paper on to his lawn ;
He saw the white wings blindly fluttering round it.
He did not hear the whisper of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,
Was this their exquisite artistry of choice ?
Had wooers like these evolved this loveliness ?

He groped into the orchestral universe
As one who strives to trace a symphony
Back to its cause, and with laborious care
Feels with his hand the wood of the violins,
And bids you mark—Oh, good, bleak, honest soul,
So fearful of false hopes !—that all is hollow.
He tells you on what tree the wood was grown.
He plucks the catgut, tells you whence it came,
Gives you the name and pedigree of the cat ;
Nay, even affirms a mystery, and will talk
Of sundry dark vibrations that affect
The fleshly instrument of the human ear ;
And so, with a world-excluding accuracy—
Oh, never doubt that every step was true !—

Melts the great music into less than air
And misses everything.
Everything ! On one side
The music soaring endlessly through heavens
Within the human soul ; on the other side,
The unseen Composer of whose transcendent life
The music speaks in souls made still to hear.
He clung to his *vera causa*. In that law
He saw the way of the Power, but not the Power
Determining the way. Did men reject
The laws of Newton, binding all the worlds,
Because they still knew nothing of the Power
That bound them ? The stone fell. He knew not why.
The sun controlled the planets, and the law
Was constant ; but the mystery of it was masked
Under a name ; and no man knew the Power
That gripped the worlds in that unchanging bond,
Or whether, in the twinkling of an eye,
The Power might not release them from that bond,
As a hand opens, and the wide universe
Change in a flash, and vanish like a shadow,
As prophets had foretold.
He could not think
That chance decreed the boundless march of law
He saw in the starry heavens. Yet he could think
Of " chance " on earth ; and, while he thought, declare
" Chance " was not " chance " but law unrecognised ;
Then, even while he said it, he would use
The ambiguous word, base his own law on " chance " ;
And, even while he used it, there would move
Before his eyes, in every flake of colour
Inlaid upon the butterfly's patterned wing,
Legions of atoms wheeling each to its place
In ever constant law ; and he knew well
That, even in the living eye that saw them,

The self-same Power that bound the starry worlds
Controlled a myriad atoms, every one
An ordered system; and, in every cloud
Of wind-blown dust and every breaking wave
Upon the storm-tossed sea, an infinite host
Of infinitesimal systems moved by law
Each to its place; and, in each growing flower,
Myriads of atoms like concentred suns
And planets, these to the leaf and those to the crown,
Moved in unerring order, and by a law
That bound all heights and depths of the universe,
In an unbroken unity. By what Power?
There was one Power, one only known to man,
That could determine action. Herschel knew it;
The power whereby the mind uplifts the hand
And lets it fall, the living personal Will.

Ah, but his task, his endless task on earth,
Bent his head earthward. He must find the way
Before he claimed the heights. No Newton he;
Though men began to acclaim him and his law
As though they solved all mysteries and annulled
All former creeds, and changed the heart of heaven.
No Newton he; not even a Galileo;
But one who patiently, doggedly laboured on,
As Tycho Brahe laboured in old days,
Numbering the stars, recording fact on fact,
For those, who, after centuries, might discern
The meaning and the cause of what he saw.
Visions of God and heaven were not for him,
Unless his "facts" revealed them, as the crown
Of his own fight for knowledge.
It might be
The final test of man, the narrow way
Proving him worthy of immortal life,

That he should face this darkness and this death
Worthily and renounce all easy hope,
All consolation, all but the wintry smile
Upon the face of Truth as he discerns it,
Here upon earth, his only glimmer of light,
Leading him onward to an end unknown.
Faith ! Faith ! O patient, inarticulate soul,
If this were faithlessness, there was a Power,
So whispered Shadow-of-a-Leaf, that shared it with him ;
The Power that bowed His glory into darkness
To make a world in suffering and in death,
The passionate price that even the Omnipotent
Must pay for love, and love's undying crown.

He hardly heard the whisper ; could not hear it
And keep his own resolve. He bowed his head
In darkness ; and, henceforth, those inward gates
Into the realms of the supernal light
Began to close.
He knew that they were closing ;
And yet—was this the dark key to Creation ?—
He shared the ecstasy also ; shared that sense
Of triumph ; broke the Bread and drank the Wine
In sacred drops and morsels of the truth ;
Shared, in renouncement of all else but truth,
A sense that he could never breathe in words
To any one else, a sense that in this age
It was expedient that a man should lose
The glory, and die this darker new-found death,
To save the people from their rounded creeds,
Their faithless faith, and crowns too lightly won.

* * * * *

Oh, yet the memory of one midnight hour !
Would that she knew. Would God that she knew now

Truer than all his knowledge was that cry;
The cry of the blind life struggling through the dark,
Upward . . . the blind brow lifted to the unseen.

He groped along the dark unending way
And saw, although he knew not what he saw,
Out of the struggle of life, a mightier law
Emerging; and, when man could rise no higher
By the fierce law of Nature, he beheld
Nature herself at war against herself.
He heard, although he knew not what he heard,
A Voice that, triumphing over her clashing chords,
Resolved them into an infinite harmony.
Whose was that Voice? What Power within the flesh
Cast off the flesh for a glory in the mind,
And leapt to victory in self-conquering love?
What Voice, whose Power, cast Nature underfoot
In Bruno, when the flames gnawed at his flesh;
In Socrates; and, in those obscure Christs
Who daily die; and, though none other sees,
Lay hands upon the wheel of the universe
And master it; and the sun stands dark at noon?
These things he saw but dimly. All his life
He moved along the steep and difficult way
Of Truth in darkness; but the Voice of Truth
Whispered in darkness, out of the mire and clay,
And through the blood-stained agony of the world,
"Fear nothing. Follow Me. I *am* the Way."

So, when Death touched him also, and England bore
His dust into her deepening innermost shrine,
The Voice he heard long since, and could not hear,
Rose like the fuller knowledge, given by Death
To one that could best lead him upward now,
Rose like a child's voice, opening up the heavens,
I am the Resurrection and the Life.

EPILOGUE

Up the Grand Canyon the full morning flowed.
I heard the voices moving through the abyss
With the deep sound of pinewoods, league on league
Of singing boughs, each separate, each a voice,
Yet all one music;

The Eternal Mind
Enfolds all changes, and can never change.

Man is not exiled from this Majesty,
The inscrutable Reality, which he shares
In his immortal essence. Man that doubts
All but the sensuous veils of colour and sound,
The appearances that he can measure and weigh,
Trusts, as the very fashioner of his doubt,
The imponderable thought that weighs the worlds,
The invisible thought that sees; thought that reveals
The miracle of the eternal paradox—
The pure unsearchable Being that cannot be
Yet Is, *and still creates and governs all;*
A Power that, being Unknowable, is best known;
For His transcendent Being can reply
To every agony, "I am that which waits
Beyond the last horizon of your pain,
Beyond your wildest hope, your last despair,
Above your heaven, and deeper than your hell.
There is not room on earth for what ye seek.
Is there not room in Me?"

Time is a shadow
Of man's own thought. Things past and things to come
Are closed in that full circle. He lives and reigns;

Dies with the dying bird; and, in its death,
Receives it to His heart. No leaf can fall
Without Him; who, for ever pouring out
His passion into worlds that shall attain
Love in the highest at last, returns for ever
Along these roads of suffering and of death,
With all their lives upgathered to His heart
Into the heaven of heavens. How else could life
Lay hold on its infinitude, or win
The strength to walk with Love in complete light?
For, as a child that learns to walk on earth,
Life learns these little rhythms of earthly law,
Listens to simple seas that ebb and flow,
And spells the large bright order of the stars
Wherein the moving Reason is revealed
To man's up-struggling mind, or breathed like song
Into the quiet heart, as love to love.
So, step by step, the spirit of man ascends
Through joy and grief; and is withdrawn by death
From the sweet dust that might content it here,
Into His kingdom, the one central goal
Of the universal agony. He lives.
He lives and reigns, throned above space and time;
And, in that realm, freedom and law are one;
Fore-knowledge and all-knowledge and freewill,
Make everlasting music.

Far away
Along the unfathomable abyss it flowed,
A harmony so consummate that it shared
The silence of the sky; a song so deep
That only the still soul could hear it now:
New every morning the creative Word
Moves upon chaos. Yea, our God grows young.
Here, now, the eternal miracle is renewed.
Now, and for ever, God makes heaven and earth.

PART III. THE LAST VOYAGE

PRELUDE

THE mist rolled back.
 There was a roar of waters;
And it was night, black night, in midmost ocean,
Lonely and void, as when the lifeless planet
Moved without eyes to see or ears to hear,

Yet, after uncounted æons,
Out of the clashing of those blind elements,
Endlessly heaving and sinking, tossing their spindrift,
In what still seemed their old unchanging way,
Something—by what wild chemistry?—had arisen;
A vast and terrible Something had—evolved;
Something that had four thousand searching eyes,
And was approaching, through that darkness, now.

Night still concealed it. Winds and waves roared on,
Blind as of old; yet—as that Something neared,
The innermost values of the whole dark world
Seemed to be changed by its approaching power.

Then, with a long-drawn thunder, and blazing lights,
A monstrous portent surged across the dark. . . .
I saw a great ship, like a lighted City,
Cleaving that night, between two unseen worlds.

* * * * *

It passed, and left no trace, and the black brine
Heaved, as of old, when the blind lifeless planet
Moved without eyes to see or ears to hear.

Out of this lifeless welter, hither and thither,
Tossing its random spume through endless years,
By chance, no more, as the fool's heart ordains,
The life that shaped that monstrous portent rose,
Evolved—by what wild miracle? Had the less
Brought forth the greater, by those delicate grades
And slight divisions wherein the dim-eyed sophist
Delights to lose his soul; each grade a gulf
In thought, yet in itself so seeming narrow,
He counts them all as nothing, and leaps the abyss
Between the lifeless æons, and this dread *Now;*
When, urged by a purpose, moving to a goal,
That vast arrival thundered through the deep?

Whence? Whither? Why? It passed, and left no trace.
And That which lay beyond, the ultimate Cause,
And Goal of all—enduring through all change—
The self-subsistent, uncontingent Mover,
What word of That?
Only the vast black seething;
The salt cold spindrift, and the ghostly surf
As the dark hills dissolved and streamed away
Whispering,—*as it was in the beginning . . .*
Then, challenging, as the great new surges rose,
Et nunc, et semper; then that æonian roar
In saecula saeculorum, from beyond
The last horizons of the unsearchable sea.

The mist rolled down; and it was night, black night.

I

NIGHT, and the great ship like a lighted city
In mid-Atlantic, cleaving the cold black storm;
A city detached from all the coasts of man,
Speeding across the abyss of loneliness
Between two unseen worlds.

Unseen, I walked the long deserted decks
That dwindled into the gloom like rain-washed streets.
I peered through lighted windows; heard the sound
Of music from its wide, bright, pillared rooms,
Crowded with festive tables, gay with flowers.
I stole up shining corridors; and saw
In one dim cabin, under shaded lights,
A group of graver faces, hushed and still,
Intently watching a flushed unconscious child.

It was no dream. I heard her difficult breathing.
I saw the white-capped nurse; the kneeling mother,
With drawn and quivering under-lip; the father
Standing behind her, silent, with one hand
Laid gently on her shoulder; and the surgeon,
Two fingers on the child's wrist as he counted . . .
The gleam of the ticking watch.
At last he rose,
Muttering to the father—"I shall come back,
In half an hour."
Outside the purser's office
The captain met him.

" How is your little patient ? "
" No hope, unless I operate. It's a risk.
One chance in a thousand. If only we could have made
New York in time, Johns Hopkins has a man
That might have saved her. It will be too late.
We're fifteen hundred miles away to-night."—
" Your skill and your experience. . . ."
" Ah, but this
Is different. It's a case for specialists.
A fair all-round musician can't compete
With Kreisler—not in Bach. Besides, at sea,
We haven't half the equipment."—
" What is the name
Of this Johns Hopkins' man, who might have saved her ? "
—" Marlowe. I wish to God I could consult him."—
—" I think you can. He is on his way to Europe.
I saw his name in our own wireless news
This morning. He is somewhere on the Atlantic."—
—" What ship ? "—
" The *City of Paris*."—
" Where is she now ? "
" Four hundred miles away."
He beckoned the purser—
" Telephone up to the wireless-room, and tell them
To get the *City of Paris* . . . an urgent message
Is coming through, at once."

* * * * *

The storm roared
And whistled across the bare, dark, upper deck
As they climbed up to the small bright wireless-room.
All round them surged the night of midmost ocean,
Inhuman, void, as when the lifeless planet
Moved without eye to see or ear to hear,

Unconscious through the unconscious. . . .
Four hundred miles away, through that black night,
The *City of Paris*, plunging the opposite way,
Bore, in the midget span of one man's brow
The saving light—a little vanishing spark . . .
Sundered from those who needed it, by gulfs
Of thundering darkness, leagues of volleying sleet,
Wild howling maelstroms of the world of matter,
Through which, outside the wireless-room, no voice
Could pierce, no message pass from mind to mind.
They closed the padded door. The tumult died.
At once, in that small luminous inner realm,
Through deeper regions, undisturbed by storm,
Annihilating space the signals came.
Tap-tap, *tap-tap*, the moving finger wrote.
Five hundred miles to westward the *Majestic*
Told the *Homeric*, far to eastward now,
Of hurricanes approaching. *Tap-tap-tap*
The dark *Leviathan* answered from the north.
The listener, with the head-clips, heard their voices
In an ethereal calm. As though a child
Were playing with its toys, three feet away,
The *Mauretania*, surging through the night,
Six hundred miles to southward, droned its tale.
Carmania, like an elfin horn, replied
Nearing the fog-bound Banks; while, racing home,
Under clear stars, through sleeker softer seas,
The *Berengaria* flung her deeper chords
Of welcome and farewell to half the world.

"You have sent our call out?"
"Yes—no answer yet.
Ah, here she comes!" *Tap-tap*, a silver note
Rose high and clear, vibrating like a star,
The *City of Paris*.

The moving finger wrote,
Dot—dash—dot—dash. " Is Dr. Marlowe aboard ? "
—" Yes "—
" Tell him that the surgeon of the *Olympic*
Wants his advice . . . an urgent case . . . a child."
—" I'll send for him, immediately."
" Take down
These details in the meantime, and repeat.
Marlowe will understand. When he has read them
Give me his answer, as quickly as you can." . . .
Tap-tap, tap-tap, dot—dash, dot—dash, dot—dash.

I walked upon the sheltered deck below
While the swift messages passed. I heard the sound
Of music, and the shuffle of dancing feet
In the great ball-room ; caught a hundred gleams
Of separate lives, each going its own way,
While the one ship took all to the one goal
(As the one planet bears ten thousand ships,
And the one cosmos binds a myriad worlds . . .),
Whence ? Whither ? Why ? . . .
In the dark-panelled lounge
Wreathed with cigar-smoke, voices quietly drawled,
Clubs and *No Trumps.* Cards gleamed and glasses tinkled.
There, and there only, in solemn make-believe,
I saw the reign of Chance.
In the dark bows,
A strange old fellow-passenger, buried and swathed
In travelling coat and muffler ; his keen face,
All but the deep magnetic eyes, obscured
Beneath his dark slouch hat,—came up and joined me.
" You've heard," he said ; and as he spoke, my flesh
Tingled as at a voice from other worlds.
" They stop the ship at ten, for half an hour,

While our good surgeon operates on that child.
Marlowe advised it, instantly, by wireless.
He'll be in touch throughout."
" You think they'll save her ? "
He glanced at me and answered, " *They* may save her.
But who are *They ?* "

II

In a small cabin, lit by a single port-hole,
The poet, rapt and tense, took up his pen. . . .

Whose Mind dictated, or whose Will compelled
His half-unconscious music? Not his own.

But, while he pondered that deep mystery
Of order and control throughout the world,
And groped for one clear instance, only one
Wherein the Eternal Intellect might be seen
Directly at work among material things,
Using them, and conveying them to an end
Directly, as the mind uplifts the hand
To ends beyond the scope of 'natural law'
And secondary causes,
a strange light
For one wild moment flashed on him. He saw
The Supreme Art, the one world-ruling Will
Directly at work, upon material things.
He saw them moved—caught the controlling Power
In act, where Science dropt its proud precision,
And fell back blindly on an empty name—
Instinct. The swallow, drawn across the seas
Like an unerring needle, to its goal.
Instinct. That elfin nest of twigs and clay
Built by the ignorant instrument—in whose hand?
Instinct. The bee, a cluster of blind atoms,
Building its architectural honeycomb
With intellectual gold. And, clearer still,

Beyond the scope of chemistry as far
As the artist's canvas from the palette's chaos,
That intricate pattern on a fritillary's wing;
Wherein each separate atom in each grain
Of colour had been driven to its own place,
Blindly, to form that intellectual scheme
Which men call Beauty. On those wings he saw
Not only what the scientist sees, the curves
Evolved for flight, or colours for masquerade;
But something beyond use, beyond the scope
And aim of the blind struggle for mere life,—
A clear-cut pattern, a little heavenly plan,
A little wandering isle of art in nature,
Divine mosaic, exquisitely inlaid
As with celestial jewel-work. "Evolved,
By sex selection," drones the one-eyed sophist.
Do these winged blossoms woo and choose their mates, then,
For subtleties of colour and fair design
Beyond the ecstatic sense of half mankind?
Let the world babble. The artist's eye discerned
The absolute Master-craftsman in his work,
Work that required no signature.
Then, at once,
Translating all into the terms of song,
As though a bird in the unconscious depths
Of his own mind began to sing, he wrote:

Tell me you
That sing in the black-thorn
Out of what Mind
Your melody springs.
Is it the World-soul
Throbs like a fountain
Up thro' the throat
Of an elf with wings?

Five sweet notes
 In a golden order,
Out of that deep realm
 Quivering through,
Flashed like a phrase
 Of light through darkness.
But *Who* so ordered them ?
 Tell me, *Who ?*

You whose throats
 In the rain-drenched orchard
Peal your joys
 In a cadenced throng ;
You whose wild notes,
 Fettered by Beauty,
Move like the stars
 In a rounded song ;

Yours is the breath
 But *Whose* is the measure,
Shaped in an ecstasy
 Past all art ?
Yours is the spending ;
 Whose is the treasure ?
Yours is the blood-beat ;
 Whose is the heart ?

Minstrels all
 That have woven your housen
Of withies and twigs
 With a Mind in-wrought,
Ye are the shuttles ;
 But, out of what Darkness
Gather your thoughtless
 Patterns of thought ?

Bright eyes glance
 Through your elfin doorways,
Roofed with rushes,
 And lined with moss.
Whose are the voiceless
 Pangs of creation?
Yours is the wild bough:
 Whose is the Cross?

Carols of light
 From a lovelier kingdom,
Gleams of a music
 On earth unheard,
Scattered like dew
 By the careless wayside,
Pour through the lifted
 Throat of a bird.

III

" The hand that wields the knife
Will be our surgeon's. The controlling mind
Four hundred miles away, through that thick night
Is whose ?" . . .
The great ship buried her blind bows
In foam.
" Not Marlowe's ! Even his I'd call
Only a subtler instrumental mind,
Through which, as through a thought-exchange, linked up
With half the world, thousands of other minds
Remote in time, as Marlowe's is remote
In space, are speaking now." . . .
Two voices in the dark, unconsciously
Thus answered my companion. Two dark forms
Rug-wrapped in long deck-chairs, behind my own,
Talked, while I lingered on the glimmering deck
To watch the seamen as they lashed the screens
Of flapping, thrashing sail-cloth, all along
The bulwarks on the buffeted weather-side
Against the increasing storm.
The first voice, clear
And crisp, was that of the Chief, the astronomer friend
With whom I had watched the stars, one summer night
Ten years ago, from Californian hills.
The second up-welled from other and inner worlds,
Deep, quiet, musical, as an echo of Dante
In an old mountain-cloister.

It revealed
Another friend,—an old Franciscan padre,
Returning home, on his last earthly voyage,
From Rome to Santa Barbara.
The thoughts
Of all the ship were bent now on one theme—
That child,—her life, or death.
I did not turn
To greet those old companions, yet. The spell
Of that strange meeting, like the ghostly power
That in old legends, when the planets met
In certain dark conjunctures, gripped the world
With sudden meanings, not discerned before,
Constrained me still to listen.
Each, as he spoke,
Struck his own chord in the moving Symphony,—
" *The instrumental mind, in part, is Marlowe's,*"
The first clear voice went on, in wonder and awe,
" *But all this inter-dependent, intricate web,*
The invisible system of ethereal nerves
Connecting mind and hand with waves of will,
Without which both were helpless, whose are they?
We learned to use that system, by the help
Of Gilbert, shall we say, whom Verulam
Dismissed with such contempt; Galvani, too,
Ampère and Hertz, Clerk-Maxwell, Humphry Davy,
Faraday, Lodge. Thousands of men, like cells
In one organic brain have worked together
To make this moment possible, and evoke
That one reply through darkness, to the call
Our ship sent out to-night."
" And thousands more
To guide our surgeon. Verulam dismissed
Another man, four hundred years ago,
Whose mind, I think, is touching us to-night

With waves of thought, across the abyss of Time,
As closely as those others. . . ."
Time and Space
Died at the word—the rushing waves went by
In darkness . . . yet I saw. . . .

IV

GRAY'S INN,—a shadowy room, and smouldering there
Like a strange jewel on one high-panelled wall
A dark rich portrait by Sir Anthony More,
English, but all Madrid in colour and line.

Under it, hunched in a tasselled high-backed chair,
A lean form, with a mean and shifty face
Of empty craft, a green and viperish eye,
And, round his neck, the Chancellor's golden chain.

It was no dream. The fur on his rich gown
Fluffed grey as he breathed, below the thin-lipped mouth.
He choked a cough. I heard the golden links
Tinkling against his breast. . . .
Facing him sat
A short and thick-set man with shining eyes
Blithe as black cherries, in a thought-ploughed face
Of olivaster hue; his raven hair
Already streaked with grey; and, at his side,
For all his cheer, a dagger.
"So you think
You've made a great discovery, Doctor Harvey,"
The lawyer sneered, "and yet, not only Galen,
But Homer knew the motion of the blood.
There's nothing strange in that. There's not a maid
That blushes, when she meets her lover's eye,
But knows your mighty secret, and would pay
A handsome fee to cure it.

Doctor Harvey,
You should observe more closely. We need facts,
Not theories. Now my own philosophy
(Formed, as you know, in such brief hours of leisure
As I could borrow from affairs of State,
And therefore couched in very general terms)
Shows a new method of approaching Nature,
Through facts alone. It will transform the world,
It will pluck down the Stagirite, and dethrone
The pride of Plato. Had you but observed
My rules, and looked to facts; had you but seen,
Noted, considered, one poor maiden's blush,
And all that poets from the birth of Time
Have writ of those blood-roses in her face,
You had been spared the very pretty fall
That waits on all such—idols. Doctor Harvey,
I have heard already several of your friends
Calling you crack-brained. You will lose your clients.
You were a good physician. Rest on that;
But leave philosophy to the master-minds.
Wrens have their nests and eagles have their eyry
From which they scan the world."
The little man
Flushed red.
"I did not mean to boast, Lord Bacon,"
He answered softly, but with glinting eye.
"Nor did I hope to rob you of the fame
Which your philosophy, published from the heights
(Of statesmanship and law), must needs command.
Hundreds of other men have played their part
In what I called my own; and, as you say,
The motion of the blood is nothing new,
Though hitherto it seemed a random flux,
Uncertain as the breeze that fills the sail
Of our Virginian voyagers." At that phrase,

As under Raleigh's eye, the Chancellor winced.
" But now," continued Harvey, with a smile,
" A moment comes when all the separate facts
Whereof you speak so truly, may be seen
As notes in one great system. They obey
A single law. The motion of our earth
Was nothing new, but . . ."
" I reject it wholly,"
The lawyer snapped.
" Your lordship may be right,"
The little doctor answered, " and I bow
To your decision; but when Copernicus . . ."
" The prince of charlatans," the Chancellor sneered,
" A Roman priest, a canon of the Church,
Who flouted the plain sense of all mankind,
And troubled even Rome; a fabulist
Without a scruple, who would introduce
His fictions into Nature. Read your Bible.
The Bible says that Joshua stopped the sun;
And though, as I have many a time averred,
Theology and Science cannot clash
(Because they never meet), there are occasions
When eyes confirm the truth that Scripture tells.
Our eyes can see the movement of the sun.
The judgment of mankind has made our earth
Central and motionless. Therefore I accept
The fact incorporate in our daily speech,—
' Sun-rising ' and ' sun-setting.' Sir, my system
Trusts to the senses, and depends on facts."—
" But Galileo's glass ! . . ."
—" The glass was flawed
Or Galileo lying? I prefer
Our natural eyesight, Harvey."
" Yet the lens
That aids our natural sight is natural, too.

I leave the Tuscan to more starry souls;
But this new microscope . . ."
" Ah, Harvey, Harvey,
Another idol! How can it ever achieve
All those fantastic promises? What is glass
That it should open all those heights and depths
Where eyes have failed. Now, could you turn your lens
To a more natural purpose, use its powers
Of concentrating rays to kindle fires;
Or even, as an instrument of war,
Construct a burning-glass of monstrous size
Through which the sun might strike an enemy blind,
You'd then be following the true laws of thought
Inductively, to their own natural ends.
We need induction, Harvey, based on facts;
But, first, the facts. . . ."
" And, therefore, first the power
To recognise and group them in their own
Significant order; and this knowledge comes,
Most often, in an unexpected gleam,
Like memory, an intuitive synthesis,
Or a new light from heaven——"
" We must trust
Our senses, Harvey."
" And they still deceive us.
The colours of the world are in our eyes;
The music of the world is in our ears;
And only when the microcosmic mind
Of man has made its own swift synthesis,
Does it reflect, in moments of strange light,
Whether in art or science, beauty or truth,
The macrocosmic harmonies of God.
This means, I take it, that the world is made
For souls; and that God's image here on earth
Communes with its Creator, as it reads

The hieroglyphs of this material world;
Though these are only shadows."
" I perceive
You are still a slave of Plato. Give me facts."
" So be it, then. The blood, that kingly river,
Flows through the frame, as Rabelais knew. But how?
There is a rhythmic order in its flow
As noble as the movement of the heavens;
More noble; for this little realm of man
Sustains a spirit above all Space and Time.
Galen discovered much. He called the heart
The acropolis of the body. He believed
There were two streams of blood, one bright, one dark,
The bright stream flowing thro' the arteries only,
The dark stream flowing only thro' the veins.
They did not form one system. Sylvius traced
The network of the veins; and Winter found
That air gave up its brightness and its life
For some mysterious purpose in the lungs;
But all these facts were unrelated still.
They did not form one system. That strange gleam
Of recognition; that swift synthesis
Within the mind, which dawns like memory,
Discovering, not a new thing, but an old,
Something that, though unseen, was always there—
Had not yet lightened on us."

" Facts, my friend,
Not these Platonic visions!"
" Hear me first.
Vesalius found the valves within the veins,
But did not see their purpose—why they locked
Their little purple gates against the stream
In one direction only. Then Servetus,
Whom Calvin, the Reformer, burned alive,

Found that the life-stream, flowing through the lungs,
Drew its bright crimson from the fresh-drawn breath.
He saw no more. But so the moment came
Which, in a single flash, revealed the whole,
The single pulsing microcosmic plan
Which imaged the Creator in His work.
That crowning moment, by the grace of God,
Was mine, though I know well how little mine.
I traced the bright arterial stream of blood
To its remotest ends. I saw it flow,
The self-same stream, back thro' the delicate veins,
Darkening with wastage, driven by that strong tide
Behind it, back to the central throbbing heart,
And thence, once more, into the breathing lungs
To draw fresh crimson from the winds of heaven
And pour fresh life through all the mortal frame:
A steadfast rhythm, beyond our blind control
Sustained, dictated, measured by the Will
Of One above, the Supreme Artifex."
"And your chief clue to this?" . . .
"The valves that locked
In one direction only. I asked myself
What purpose . . ."
"Ah, my friend, you are not the first
To follow that old Jack-o'-Lent of the mind.
In my philosophy, now, I wholly abjure
The clue of final causes. I depend
On facts, and facts alone. There was a time
When I was greatly vexed with monstrous warts,
Caused, I believe, by handling of a toad
In one of my inquiries; for my hands
Grew like two toads themselves, with warts as large
And yellow as cowslip-buds, but cold—like stones.
Physicians had no remedy. Moons went by,
And every wart they killed engendered five.

They worked on theories. Then I learned a fact
And cured them. How? A lady of the court
Told me of something she had heard in France.
She said that if I nailed a lump of fat
Outside my window, as the sun dissolved it
The warts would melt away. I did not ask
For theories. I was well content with facts—
Facts I could test, observe with my own eyes;
And so I nailed the fat up, in the sun,
And as the sun dissolved it, day by day,
The warts diminished, till, at one same hour,
Both fat and warts completely disappeared.
That's what I call true method, sir! The proof?
Experiment! Observation! And Result!
Look at my hand, sir, clean as any babe's.
I spoke of it to Gilbert, whom you know."
"Good God!" said Harvey, "what did Gilbert say?"—
"He only stared and muttered. He was vexed
Because I rallied him on his false ideas,
His idols, as I call them. He maintains
Some wild magnetic theories, which he thinks
Will one day change the world."
"Please God, they will,"
Breathed Harvey to himself. "But I suppose
God places these obstructions in our way
To make us fight for victory, and acquire
New strength in fighting."
"But you never told me—
What think you of that other cure I found
For heaviness of the mind. It is well known
That apes are of a lively disposition;
And I suggested that a young ape's head
New-severed, and applied, sir, like a poultice
Against the nape of the neck, might well transmit
Its virtues."

Harvey smiled. "I have no doubt
Our pharmacists are right when they declare
That torments of the brain may be relieved
By wearing, on the dry, hot, throbbing brow,
Frontlets of roses, wet with morning dew;
Cool water-lilies; acid elder-drupes,
Plucked from the innermost darkness of the tree;
A frog's webbed feet; an oyster, stuffed with snow;
Moist kernels of ripe peaches; or (an aid
Which I prefer, and they omit, sometimes)
A very simple strip of linen, dipt
In cold spring-water. . . ."
The Lord Chancellor's eyes
Revolved portentously. "My chief complaint
Against the state of learning in this age
Is its defective reasoning. Your reply
Well illustrates its vagueness. I contend
That unguents are absorbed, virtues inhaled,
And poisons, too, as every murderer knows,
By subtle transpirations through the skin.
There's nothing cures a bout of sleeplessness
Like yolks of egg and powdered poppy-seed,
Not eaten, sir, but poulticed on the skin,
And many an inward torment is appeased
By plastering the intestines of a wolf,
Warm and new-killed, against the naked belly;
The sufferer's body, meanwhile, being wrapped
In bloody wolf-skins. Why? It is well known
That wolves are beasts of great edacity,
And my new method, by induction leads
Clearly to this conclusion—that their guts
Must comfort weaker bowels."
"Oh, my God,"
Groaned Harvey, under breath.

" Not only this,"
Continued the great lawyer. " I contend
That, as these vital influences may pass
Inward, so, also, if we take no care,
We may exhale our spirits through the skin,
And thereby hasten death. Now, my new method
(Which needs no special gift, for all can use it)
Leads to this clear conclusion. We should coat
Our bodies, close their pores up, with a wax
Which would prevent our sweating life away
So lavishly in summer. . . ."
" God have mercy,"
Groaned Harvey, once again ; and, as he groaned,
The lawyer, waxing eloquent, proclaimed
Not his own thoughts, but something that he grasped
Only in general terms, a spirit breathed
Into the common air by greater men
Whom he rejected.
" ' Tis for us to build
Science anew, by a far nobler method.
Plato is dead, and Aristotle dust.
We shall observe and test and climb to truth
And . . ."
As the soul revolts against the sound
Of God's own praises from a vacuous mind,
The little doctor's gorge began to rise
Against this Pharisee of the Intellect,
Whose very *New Atlantis* was a theft,
Marred in the stealing, from Sir Thomas More ;
And all that he could hear was *quack, quack, quack ;*
And *quack, quack, quack,* and *quack, quack, quack* again.
At last the Chancellor paused. His eye grew crafty,
His voice dropt.
" You have had distinguished patients,
Concerning whose infirmities you must know

More than their nearest friends. Indeed, you hold
Such knowledge as might help me greatly now
In certain state affairs. If I but knew . . ."
He whispered something that made Harvey shrink
And stare at him.
The little doctor rose.
The things that had been whispered, then, were true.
This was a man that could destroy his friend,
And Raleigh's ghost was glimmering at his side.
" Nay, Harvey ! State-craft goes with science here.
'Tis nothing more than science—to employ
Our knowledge of the elements in a man—
The chemistry of life. It is no time
For squeamishness. Men of the world must take
The world at its own value."
Harvey bowed
With irony in his heart.
" So much depends
Upon our choice of worlds, then," he replied.
" Your lordship will forgive me if I say
That, in *my* world, there is a pagan code,
A pagan oath . . ."
" Hippocrates is dead,"
The Chancellor interrupted.
" Not so dead,"
Said Harvey, " as a hundred I could name
Who still offend the sun. His words endure.
They have been quietly handed down through time
By all his followers ; and that pagan code,
That pagan oath, though every other fail,
Thank God, his poor benighted followers keep."
—" I have heard of it, of course," the Chancellor smiled,
" But never saw the text . . ."
" The terms are quaint.
They take for granted old out-worn ideas,

Curious conventions, airy absolutes
(Honour, for instance), which inductive thought,
Divorced from—Plato's method (shall we say?)
Or wed to Machiavelli, would ignore.
But, roughly, they run thus. (You will forgive
The crude fantastic rhetoric of the dead):
I swear by Paian Apollo, the Physician;
By Æsculapius and his radiant daughters
(Health and All-heal), Hygieia, Panakeia,
And all the gods and goddesses in heaven,
That I will keep this oath:
To look on him who taught me this great art
As my own father and, in after years,
If need should rise, to share my substance with him;
To look upon his sons as my own brothers,
And, if they should desire it, freely impart
My knowledge to them, asking for no guerdon;
To hand this light of knowledge on, undimmed,
To my own sons, and every true disciple
Who takes the self-same oath, but to none other;
To pass my life, and practise this great art
In righteousness; that, whatsoever house
I enter, I bring help to all that need,
And work no evil or corruption there;
That whatsoever I may hear or see,
In entering thus the hidden lives of men,
Shall still be locked in silence.
While I keep
This oath inviolate, may I still enjoy
The practice of this art, honoured by all,
In every age and clime; but, if I break it,
Then may I be dishonoured."
The Chancellor smiled
In silence, for ten seconds. Then he sneered,
"As you remarked, this rhetoric of the dead

Has a fantastic sound. Well—Doctor Harvey,
You will remember that a word from me
About your—great achievement, would resound
Through Europe ; but I shall not speak that word.
You will remain—a wren.
But this, of course
Will make it no less dangerous for yourself
To indulge in petty jealousies, or hints
That I have any reason to condemn
Your theories, but my preference for facts."
His narrowing eyes
Flashed, suddenly, like a viper's, as he rose,
And Harvey caught that gleam.
" I well believe,"
He answered, slowly, like a man too dense
To grasp the deadly meaning, and thereby
Baffling his foe with doubt, " I well believe
That all your lordship's curious—facts, will weigh
More potently than mine, in after days.
They are vouched for by the Lord High Chancellor,
Who can impose his greatness on the world
With all the awe attached to his high place.
Therefore, in future ages, when the world
Discovers other—facts, and no more reads
Or cares for what we say, your lordship's fame,
Spread by your lordship's eloquence, will content
The world that hears it echoing, and must take
(In general terms and principles, at least)
Greatness like yours on trust.
But I must go.
I have a tryst with Science."
He groped out,
Into that dark, that blind, that crooked street,
Called by the crowd *Obscurity*, to join
Gilbert, of whose blind idols half the laws
That rule the new electric world were born. . . .

V

NIGHT, on the loud Atlantic, boundless night;
Electric messages, flashing, through the storm
Like broken gleams of an order whereof man's thought
Had only discovered a fragment; and, under it all,
One voice, *You think they will save her! Swift! Be swift!*
Or knowledge will come too late!
As when the mind
Strives with the paralysed body, and strives in vain
To flash the imperative will through the leaden limbs
And rule once more, the single organic whole;
Or as the first strange nervous currents that thrill
The slow developing embryo, ere it grows
Into co-ordinate unity and power;
So now, thro' the boundless night of Space and Time,
From the centres of thought, and the brain-cells of the world,
From the Æsculapian springs on the ancient heights,
From the vine-clad islands of Cos in the Myrtoan sea,
Where Burinna, the fount of Hippocrates, murmurs and flows,
And the tree of Hippocrates bends with the weight of its years;
From the centres of light and remembrance, Athens and Rome,
Salerno, Bologna, and Paris; from rose-coloured towers
Of Heidelberg, throned o'er the Necker, but gazing afar
On the air-blue castles and mist-wreathed crags of the Rhine;

From Padua, *alma mater* of Harvey's dreams,
Where the shadow of good Fabricus walks and talks
With the shadow of Galileo, all night long;
From the new electric cities of power and speed,
London, Berlin, and the towers of the western world;
The militant intellect flashed its messages out,
Struck thro' the dense blind bulk of things and strove
To make of our chaos that interdependent whole
Which the mind and the spirit could use for each and all,
Each being the centre of all, as that ship in the night,
And the child on the ship, were the centre of heaven's wide dome,
Wherever the child and the ship and the planet might move.
Ten thousand minds, with that one small life at stake,
Unconsciously laboured there, each set on its task,
And each set apart, with its own small lamp in the dark,
In its own strict bounds, the better to serve the whole.
But always, at every blunder, and each delay,
I heard that terrible whisper—*Swift! Be swift,*
Or knowledge will come too late.
You think they will save her?
Delayed by folly, baffled and beaten again
By lethargy, in man's own sleep-walking world,
Driven back in defeat by the nightmare chaos of war
But finding new light, even there, on that blood-red road;
The struggle went on; each age with a broken cry
Ars longa, vita brevis, re-echoing still
The cry of Hippocrates, Galen and Harvey in turn,
But flinging the deathless fire with a dying hand
To youth that should follow and conquer. . . .
Swift! Be swift!
Burn thro' all obstacles now with the lightning of law.
Seize the swift fire, or the knowledge will come too late!
What years they were wasting on speed to an alien goal,
Or ever Boerhaave, and Hunter and Lister were born,

While the tardy discoverer dallied with dreams that should
grow
To ripeness, only through centuries, after what pain;
Or the thinker crouched in a ditch, while the chaos of battle
Shattered and trampled his life's work into the mire.

VI

EDGEHILL, red sun on stubble, steel blades in the sun ;
Rupert, a-flash in the saddle, and galloping by
At the head of his thundering mail-clad cavalry charge
Plumed, mailed, with face up-lifted, as if to sing ;
Shouts of command ; quick flickering tongues of fire ;
The blind concussion of guns in the welter of smoke
That swallowed the cavalry, only a furlong away ;
Death in the air !
And Harvey, the King's physician,
Crouching under a hedge, in a sheltering ditch,
Where innocent wild-flowers, blind to the madness of men,
Smiled at the sun.
The two young princes were there,
Crouching beside him. . . . He rubbed a red stain from his hand
With a dark green dock-leaf. . . .
" No," he was saying, " you twist
The tourniquet tight, round the limb, on the side of the wound
Farthest away from the heart, if it's blood flowing back
Thro' the veins ; but if it comes pulsing, jetting and bright
From an artery, fasten your tourniquet quickly above,
Between the wound and the heart."
He plucked a great poppy,
Pressed its dark core to his nostrils, and quietly breathed,
" *Could we only discover an opiate, something to drown*
The pangs of the body in sleep, while we work with the knife,
What thousands on thousands of lives would be saved.

Poor Scrope
Had twenty-four terrible gashes. To those who explore.
The marvels of this most delicate house of the soul,
This human body, the Temple of God upon earth,
What sacrilege thus to misuse it!" Then, raising his voice,
He spoke to the listening princes,—
"Did Galen not say
That his work on the Use of the Body was nought but a hymn
To the God and Creator of all. *Conditori*, he wrote,
Verum hymnum compono—
For Galen, the truest of prayers
Was the search for the truth, the striving to know, and make known,
The wisdom, the power, and the infinite goodness of God.
We grieve when we look on an exquisite tapestry torn,
A picture disfigured, a Parian masterpiece wrecked,
A desecrate shrine; yet—yet—with our wars and our sins
What havoc we make of God's image. . . ."
He shook his white head. He drew from his pocket a book.
"God help, and forgive us," he muttered. "Come—let us forget
These horrors awhile. Don't look at their hell any more.
I'll read to you till I am needed. We'll try to shut out
Their chaos; lay hold on the cosmos that underlies all,
The cosmos of music. . . .
You know those great lines of the *Georgics*
Happy is he who can search out the causes of things,
For thereby he masters all fear, and is throned above fate.
The Latin says less; but my rendering, read by the light
Of those other great lines in his Æneid, can hardly be wrong:

Are not the sky and the earth, and the wild-flowing plains of the ocean,

Ay, and the moon on her way, and the sun in his chariot of splendour,
All sustained from within, by a Spirit, a Mind in the cosmos,
Moving the blindfold mass. . . .
Et magno se corpore miscet. . . ."

Was it thunder of horsemen, or only the rush of the waves?
Was it only the pulse of the turbines, down in the dark?
The throb of mechanical pistons, obeying a law,
Moving in rhythm, but shaped and controlled by a Mind;
But used for a purpose, and aimed at what unseen goal?

VII

THE lamps gleamed out along the well-screened decks.
The wind keened through the cordage, and I heard
The Atlantic seething by. . . .
Was I awake
In that far world, or was I dreaming now?
Two rug-wrapped forms behind me, in deck-chairs
Were talking of that child—and that strange fight
With Time and Space to save her.
" *What does it mean,—*
This intricate organisation of the world
Into a single interdependent whole? "
The Chief was speaking, my astronomer friend.
" What does it mean? This growth of our control
Over our space-time world, the racing ships,
The electric word, and more mysterious far,
That inconceivable speed of cosmic light
Which is controlled by Something, not ourselves,
Controlled and urged in endless rhythmic waves,
Flashing for ever through the unplumbed abyss
For some inscrutable end, from star to star.
What *can* it mean? An urgency so vast,
And so stupendous, flashing on and on,
Through endless ages, with such constancy,
And such perfection of organic law
That we forget its movement and its power,
An urgency that links all worlds in one
(For what deep purpose and at whose command?)
Must have an aim stupendous as itself,
In God's own counsels.

Padre, there are times"—
His voice dropped low, and deepened with his thought-
" *When, on my lonely mountain-top, the sense*
Of this appalling mystery drives my thoughts
To the sheer brink of madness. I look up
And out, beyond our Milky Way, and see
Those twisting nebulæ, like coils of mist
Where suns as vast as our whole universe
Are less than atoms. Then, beneath my feet
I see the dust, of which each molecule now,
Rends open, in its infinitesimal heart,
Unfathomable gulfs of suns and stars.
And man, who sails midway between the heights
And depths, and is the measure of them all,
Can only dream that, as his own control
Of Nature grows with his own growing mind,
So the Supreme Control, from depth to height,
Of all this moving universe abides
With the one Perfect Will and Supreme Mind."

Then, in the dark, the second voice replied,
" That's what we seek for, in our mortal blindness,—
The deep-set unseen Centre that controls
The vast organic cosmos it evolves
Through Time and Space. Armies of facts are ours.
They crowd upon us till our knowledge melts
Into a wilder chaos. Ant-like men,
As that lost poet said, go staggering by
Balancing awful libraries of fact
On their bald skulls, while, more than all, we need
Co-ordinating power to grasp and use
The knowledge we have gained. We need a mind
To grasp your own discoveries as one whole•
With ours, who, also, in our age-long war,

Experience and observe some flaming truths;
So that our future Faradays need not say
'I enter another room, and lock my doors
On science, when I kneel.' With such a mind,
We might achieve, not that armed truce of thought
Between the Faith and Science, reconciled
Only to pass, and shun each other's gaze,
But that great golden symphony of thought
Which, long ago, the Angelic Doctor heard
Throbbing from hell to heaven, organic truth,
Wherein each note, in its own grade, rings clear,
As in a single orchestra, whose chords
Were chaos, till each filled its own true place
In the one golden cosmos of the song.
We should discover, then, that all the gulfs
Between your friends and mine, are gulfs indeed,
But only gulfs, not clashing contraries.
We need a new Aquinas now to bridge them,
A pontifex to make our sundered truths
As true a whole as, in each human frame,
The orchestral personality of man,
That microcosm, clothed with mortal clay,
Quickened by all the accordant senses, crowned
By thought; and subtly ennobled, lifted higher,
By that strange power which, in our darkness kneels,
And sometimes moves the world. For man himself,
In his mysterious unity, images
The hierarchic cosmos, through all grades
From earth's blind clay, up to the supreme Mind
Which moves and rules the Whole. The separate note
Not only plays its part within that Whole,
But is itself a symphony in little;
An atom, filled with music, by the wheels
Of planetary electrons, which reflect
The music of the spheres.

All analogues
Fail; but we need that deeper monist now,—
Not one who delves only to find the skull
Skin-deep beneath the skin, and everywhere
Under the surface finds new surfaces;
But one who reads, in Nature's crookéd script,
Scrawled on the rocks or scrolled within the sky,
The eternal hieroglyphs; and truly sees
As Plato, for one burning moment, saw,
Through earth's distorting shadows, Beauty enthroned;
Or as that strange Emanuel of the Moon,
The wild philosopher-fabulist, Swedenborg,
Mightiest of all the minds that ever crashed
To madness in the splendour of that Gaze
Which none can meet and live, still lived to see
The secret correspondences of earth
And all its laws with that celestial world;
Walked through all gardens as thro' Paradise,
And talked with angels on his native hills
As on the hills of heaven.
Science now
So strangely nears by its own arduous road
The idealist's world. . . . Your atomists have dissolved
Their old material 'solids' into a mist
Not so unlike the veil that Berkeley drew
Between his face and God.
That thin bright mist
Of protons and electrons veils a Power
That might annul or neutralise them all,
So that, like Prospero's gorgeous pageantry
This universe of dense material forms
Might, in the apostle's 'twinkling of an eye,'
Melt into spirit-realms, where we should see
As when the film of cataract is removed
From blinded eyes, and all the coloured fields

Shine out anew, with flocks on distant hills;
Or when that veil which hides the ethereal world
Was rifted, and men heard behind the storms
Of their own world, in deep unbroken calm
Those radiant messages, calling and replying,
Across the Atlantic night. If our poor toys,
Our webs of wire, hung in the whistling wind,
Give us these glimpses of unguessed at realms,
What splendour and what music, what full blaze
Of vivid life may burst on us, when Death
Strips off the cataract-veils of this dull flesh.
The analogue fails, yet this discovery, too,
This wireless miracle, like a lightning flash,
Confirms old gropings into the dark beyond;
Brings us a little nearer, not to heaven,
But to a glimpse, by parable, if you will,
Of how some ancient thoughts which men cast off
As idle tales, came nearer to the truth
Than their first thinkers knew;
Suggests analogous laws in deeper realms
Hints at the means whereby Omniscience works,
When prayer strikes home to the deep heart of things.
Did not the Angelic Scholar who unfolded
Out of the Aristotelian acorn all
Those heaven-embracing boughs for Dante, write,—
Immortal spirits, transcending Space and Time
Can instantly be present where they will;
Even as their thought, without process of reason,
Grasps in immediate vision, all that man,
By slow discourse, groping from point to point,
Sees but in fragments, losing what he won
On other heights, when he attains to new.
For seldom, even in memory, man holds fast
The splendours he saw clearly yesterday;
Nor, though the Way inexorably leads him

On to new splendours, does the new atone
For all he leaves behind, till on the last
Consummate height, full memory returns
With the full vision; and, in the mind of God,
He sees the eternal aspect of the whole.
There, as Augustine says, the glorified body
Moves wherever it will, to every distance,
Like the sun's ray; for, in the City of God,
Wherever the spirit listeth, it shall be.
There shall we run, and not be weary again;
Because the world is conquered. There the mind
Using the bridle of law constrains and guides
Dumb Nature, as in ancient days, the Power
Rode into Jerusalem, on a foal that wore
A cross upon its shoulders. Here, the palms
Of victory are soon withered; but, in heaven,
Our warfare is accomplished. Here, on earth,
The mind of man is like a little mirror,
Reflecting what it faces, and no more.
Carry it up the intellectual heights
And it will show you parables, one by one,
In crag and pine and cloud. The wayside flower
Will float within it, and the mountain eagle
Gyre through its midget sky. It will reveal
A dark earth-cleaving valley, a snowy peak,
Up-towering; each a fragment, a bright patch
Of colour, a delicate shadow, a broken image
Of that Completeness which must still escape it.
For, round each gleaming picture, the blind frame
Of man's own mind shuts out the Whence and Why.
Letters and words we read, not sentences
Of the world's volume . . . single hieroglyphs,
Not the vast epic of the eternal hills
Like armies of archangels thundering home
Into the mind of God.

We stare through heaven
And see a moment's eddy, a flying whirlpool
On that dark river of stars;
But all its intricate intellectual systems,
Wheeling around the one eternal Throne,
Are hidden more deeply from man's plodding reason,
Escape the range of that small mirror's eye,
More utterly than the towers of the New World,
Evade the mind and eye of a nestling wren
Under its mother's breast, in a creviced wall,
Among the coombs of Devon. Yet this glory
Is ours, and not the wren's, that we discern
Our failure, which is victory, in the end.
For, by the measurement of our loss we know
Something of what we lose. That deep abyss,
An infinite vacuum, opening in our minds
To earth's and heaven's abhorrence, must be filled.
Like rushing air, like a wild ocean plunging
Over a precipice, the whole universe,
And all that it can give, wealth, knowledge, power,
May then be drawn into that infinite void;
But it is never filled till God Himself
Flow into it, with His Love, which is our peace."

VIII

In her dim cabin, above the unconscious child,
The mother bowed her head,
Remembering, not repeating with her lips,
The old supplication to the God in Man. . . .
I am not worthy, Lord, that Thou shouldst enter
Under my roof. Thy word, Lord, from afar. . . .
I cannot understand the terrible powers
Encompassing us—only that they confirm
Thy power, and all their laws are but Thy will.
I cannot pray 'Thy will, not mine, be done';
Not now; not now. At every other time,
But oh, not now. Save me but this, dear Lord.
Mine is the prayer from which Thy soul refrained,
In Thine own agony, to the Eternal Father,
Who could have sent Thee, instantly, from Heaven,
Legions of angels. As the words of man
Have struck across the darkness and the storm,
Stand Thou far off, but send Thy healing word.

IX

I PASSED the door of the operating-room.

Two white-capped nurses with their cool quick hands
Had stripped a spacious cabin, and laid out
A bare clean table.
All was ready now.
The clinging pungent breath of the antiseptic
Crept through the long white corridor and submerged
Its oily smells of rubber and heated paint. . . .

" God, but it carries you back," a voice said, passing.
" Whiffs of iodoform, blowing all over France,
From every village behind the lines. It killed
Even the smell of the gasoline. . . ."
Then those two,
Walking behind me again, voicing my thoughts,
Like voices heard in a dream.
" Not long ago,
They only laughed when Lister. . . ."
" He has joined
Those other voices now, beyond the storm.
How many lives has Lister saved since then ? "

" In eighteen-seventy, armies rotted to death
For lack of what he taught us ; and the knife
Sent more than half its victims to the grave.
So Lister, whom they sneered at, must have saved
Some fifty million lives throughout the world,
Men, women, children."—

" More than thrice the number
That fifteen nations, slaughtering night and day,
For those five years of glorious war. . . ."
" And now
Here, in the ship, that child would die to-night,
Had it not been for Lister."
" But the mind
That flashed the light on Lister ? "
" As I said,
' *They* still may save the child. But who are *They ?* ' "

With that strange question echoing in my brain
I reached my cabin, and shut all voices out,
All but the swish of the long wave rushing by.
Then, as I lay in the dark, with eyes half shut,
One broken glimpse, as though an angel tried
To answer a child's question with a picture
Shown in a magic mirror, one fleeting glimpse
Of all that intricate interdependent whole
Gleamed on me, and I saw,—
I saw, as if thro' a port-hole opening there
Its gleaming round in the solid and brass-bound walls
Of our space-time world, a magical vision, alive
As the living truth,—an exquisite old French village,
Embosomed in vine-clad hills.
It was no dream.
The bird's nest cottages, washed with lilac and rose,
The brown thatched roofs, with flowers growing out of the thatch,
Each side of the bright little straggling sun-bathed street;
The chuckled delight of the river that flowed beside them,
Belying its name, *La Furieuse*, dark and cool ;
The delight of the riverside willows, in gleams of the wind,
Ruffling from green to grey, each leaf as it turned
Distinct as a sparkle of dew ; the clang of the bell

At the Ursuline convent; the cluck of the hens at the doors;
The faint sour whiff of the tannery—its brown yard
So soft underfoot with the tatters of rusty bark
That carts which had rattled like musketry over the cobbles
Out in the street, and the clattering sabots beside them
All seemed soundless as dreams as they passed its gate;
And, drowning its acrid tang, all round it breathed
Lavender, jessamine, roses, in clustering gardens;
And, clear as in crystal, a little above and beyond,
I saw the bright stalls and the butterfly splashes of colour
Where seven old witches, with shawls round their wicked old shoulders,
Hunched up on the stones of the market-place (once a church),
Now turned out their butter, in round pats yellow as cowslips,
Now piled up their baskets of onions and rosy-cheeked apples,
Now counted their eggs and their money, or knitted and chattered.
It was no dream.
The glint of the sun on their needles;
The chime of a distant forge; the laugh of a child;
Cocks crowing and oxen lowing;
All told me this.

Far off, on the deck of a ship, like a voice in a dream,
Echoed those words, once more—"You think they will save her?"
Far off, in the thick of the dark Atlantic storm
Like a voice in a dream, replying,—
They *may save her;*
But who are They?

And then, as to men in an airship
That swoops to its goal, the heart of their vision draws nearer,
One cottage, one garden, grew large in the magical window;
And, under a gnarled old mulberry tree, I saw
In a stained blue nankeen blouse, with his bare brown legs
Out-straddled in front of an easel, an urchin of twelve,
(What fount of our hope was this?) whom the town of Arbois,
Had nicknamed 'Louis the Artist.'
Look—look long,
Would you fathom those grey-green eyes. . . .
For there, unknown to the world, was the light that we looked for,
The fount of our hope for the child on the storm-tossed ship,
Far off, in Space and Time, but conquering both
As the message that flowed through the ether under the storm,
Distinct to the sight, as that other was clear to the hearing,
He stood there, making his picture,—
Louis Pasteur.
His bare brown legs apart, his sun-burnt toes,
Down-settling into the turf, his mind intent,
He was drawing a neighbour's portrait, in coloured chalks.

He hummed to himself as he worked,
An odd little ditty, that went to a tune of his own:

I saw an elf
Proudly enthroned on a dandelion flower
And singing to himself:

A bee-sized boy
With little green eyes like emerald sparks,
And little red lips of joy!

What sing you there?
I whispered him soft as a cloud might whisper
High up in the April air.

But he sang on
With less than the heed that a man might pay
To a voice beyond the sun.

His sitter, at ease in a chair, with a glass beside him,
Brimmed with red wine, was the Mayor of Arbois himself,
Monsieur Pereau,—a little uneasy, perhaps,
Not sure that it wholly befitted his dignity thus
To sit for an urchin, and yet, as the lad's pastels
Had won such approval (and cost very little). . . Ah, well,
He was there, in his very best uniform, braided with silver,
The cross of the Legion of Honour, the tricolour scarf,
And a snowy-white stock, over which his self-satisfied face
Smiled rosily down on the sun-burnt artist of twelve
Through whom, and through this one hour, could the great man know it,
All ages to come might borrow this one swift glimpse
Of his plump and benignant memory, otherwise lost
In the vast and gloomy abysses that Nature reserves
For the special oblivion of mayors.
Thus let him emerge
Blue-eyed, from a background of blue, with his bristling hair
And the heavy moustache that seemed made to be dipped in a froth
Of golden refreshment, and afterwards wiped with a napkin.

"Who taught you to draw, mon petit?"
"My father. He made me this easel."
"But tanners don't draw."
"He painted a picture at Marnoy, before we came here

On one of the doors of our house. It shows an old soldier,
Tilling the ground like a peasant. He leans on his spade,
In his faded and tattered old uniform, daubed with the clay,
And dreams of the Emperor's eagles, against a grey sky
And misty blue hills. He painted his memories there.
You know that my father was one of the Emperor's men,
Though he never will talk of it now——"
"I know. I have seen him,
On Sundays, he looks very smart, and he wears his frock-coat
Like a veteran, too, and his ribbon, the Legion of Honour,
Says everything. Why should he speak? I myself should be proud
To be one of Napoleon's corporals——"
"No. It's not pride.
His peasant is bowed, in deep thought. I have seen the same look
In his eyes; and one evening, in winter, beside our own fire,
He told me—some things he remembered."
"Ah, wonderful tales!
The trumpets! The banners!"
"No! No! They were terrible things!
The thousands and thousands that died in the hands of the surgeon,
For lack of——"
"For lack of——?"
"I don't understand; but he said
Their wounds had all festered. He thought that they needn't have died,
If only——"
"If only?"
"Ah well, you would smile if I told you;
For all he could say was just this—if the surgeon's own knives,

Before they were used, had been dropt into scalding hot water
The chances were better. It happened, by accident, once;
And the surgeon scalded his hands, in pulling them out;
But after the amputation, although it was bad,
The wound healed best of them all."
" What reasoning, child!
What nonsense! Boiling the knives!"
" I knew you would smile.
But—my father—he notices things.
He says that no gardener ever despises a seed
No matter how small it may be.
He says that the silk-looms of France
Would be idle to-morrow if silkworms forgot to lay eggs.
Then half of her riches would go."
" Tra la! What a child!
But it's true. Very true. For the women, all over the world,
Sail under the fluttering colours of Lyons to-day.
They must tread in the sheen of the peacock, and shimmer like brooks
When the kingfisher streaks them with blue, and the dragon-flies flash.
They must dance in a mist of the sunset, with stars in their hair,
And a film of the rainbow to wrap round their shoulders at dawn.
My daughters! Tut! tut! But no matter. I suffer for France.
The world must have silks."
" And the silkworm its mulberry leaves."

They were whispering over his head.
The low wind shivered and breathed through the mulberry leaves,
Above him, as though it were trying to whisper a thought.

For the Spirit of Time was there
And it knew that the silk-looms of France
Would be stilled in a few more years
By something that shrivelled the wings
Of the moth in its golden cocoon ;
And then, under mulberry boughs,
The boy would be poring, intent,
Through a lens, to discover the cause
In that infinitesimal life
Which swarms in the blood of a gnat
And can bring down a kingdom to death.

And, when he discovered that cause,
And declared that the cause should be crushed,
At once, in the hour of his triumph,
The hate of the world would begin.
Since the cause could only be crushed
By a sacrifice, moments of loss,
For a gain too great to be told,
The blind brute crowd that he saved
Would pelt him with stones in the streets ;
And his envious rivals would turn
And jeer with the ignorant crowd.
In the name of the science he loved,
In the name of the truth he adored,
In the hour when he glorified France
With a splendour that never can die,
When he stretched out his hands to her, filled
With miraculous gifts from his mind,
When he poured out his treasures of thought
At her feet, they would spit in his face,
They would brand him as liar and fool,
And when they had broken his heart,
And basest and bitterest of all,
Robbed him of joy in his task,

They would bid him work on, in the night.
Paralysed, desolate, old. . . .
Not caring at all any more. . . .
And *then*—they would crown him with fame.

For the way of it never has changed,
Though the name of the way will be new
As each generation arrives,
And discards, not the wrong, but its name.
Yet, paralysed, desolate, old,
He would fight, and fight on till the end;
To the saving, not only of France,
Thro' her silk-looms which, after the War,
Would pay off the Prussian again;
But—on—on—on—thro' the dark
To the saving of myriads of men,
For the light that enkindled his mind
Would be flashed overseas to the North;
Where Lister, the Chief, in the wards
Of that hospital, wrestled with Death
As Heracles wrestled of old.

And on—on—on—through the dark
Of that infinitesimal world
To the proof that no life without life
Could be born, and the infinite goal.

" But it runs back farther than that,"
the lad went on,
As though he heard nothing at all.
" There's a curious rhyme
He'd repeat to us, saying it showed by what fairy-like threads
Past, present and future, are bound in the web of the world."

Then the barefoot artist, choosing his creamiest chalk
For the plump white hand that reposed on the breast of the
Mayor,
Lowered his voice and quietly murmured that song. . . .
Was it crooned by himself? Or droned through the
lavender clump
By a wandering bee, from a garden of memory lost
In the drowsy recesses and dim beginnings of time?

A princess lived in China
Two thousand years ago,
And in her secret garden
Great mulberries used to grow,
With crooked boughs and spreading leaves
And deep dark roots below. . . .

He broke off, with a smile.
" Our fairy-tale
Runs farther back than that. The song means nothing
Unless you've heard the tale."
" But tell me, then."
" Not I, m'sieu. There is no voice but one
Can tell that tale; and, even so, your ears
Must be attuned to it. If you lie awake
At midnight, you may hear it, in the sound
Of flowing water, or—leaves in a low wind. . . ."

And there—as though my half-shut eyes had closed
In bodily sleep, but left my soul awake,
The world grew dark; and, in the dark, I heard
His voice die out. . . .
As when the listener turns
The wireless disk; and, in a single breath,
Moves thro' a continent, hears the murmuring throngs
Of capital after capital growing loud

And dying, with gutteral scraps of Northern speech,
Or softer tones from Mediterranean shores;
A statesman bawling lies; a volley of cheers;
Casino tunes; the shuffle of dancing feet
In far Vienna; or Kreisler's violin
Crying across the Babylonian night;

Or even, in Morse, like faint bewildered horns,
Groping through fog, calls of a ship at sea. . . .

So, not through Space, but out of the depths of Time
A stream of music, softer than the wind
Whispering among the mulberry leaves began
To breathe the tale that Louis refused to tell. . . .
A smooth dark stream of rhythm, through which I heard
Voices that died four thousand years ago
And voices yet unborn, orchestral cries
Of prophecy, and dramatic undertones
Deepening the legend, colouring it with thoughts
Beyond the boy's horizon. It seemed to flow
Like that mysterious timeless river of Time
Out of the future, back into the past,
To that strange point where past and future meet,
In one eternal and consummate Now.
For, as it whispered through the mulberry trees,
It linked the day unborn—when young Pasteur
Should seek and find among their rustling leaves
The invisible and innumerable hosts
Of death, in worlds of infinitesimal life—
With that lost day, four thousand years ago,
When, to the same low rustling tune, they breathed
Through one wild fable, hints of the full plan:

Four thousand years ago, in old Pekin,
A queen reigned in a palace, whose wild domes

Gleamed like the magic bubbles blown at dawn
From ivory hookahs by the dream-drugged gods.

Four thousand years ago, in her lost garden,
Enclosed by rose-red walls, great mulberry trees
Drowsed in the sun; and, cradled on their leaves,
The silk-worm spun its exquisite cocoons.
She watched them, and a sudden shining thought
Robed in a rainbow, like a statelier queen
Moved through her mind.
She dreamed of it all night,
And, in the morning, called three tongueless slaves
And told them to set up a secret loom
Within the palace. But to make quite sure
The secret would be kept, their headless trunks
Were thrown at night into the Yellow River
Beyond those rose-red walls, in old Pekin.

Then, with her singing daughters, she went out
Into her garden, at the break of day,
To pluck the mulberries. In their hands they bore
Three gilded baskets, covered with green leaves
And, under those green leaves, if you had looked,
You would have seen three freshly severed heads.
They buried them in the garden, at the roots
Of those great brooding trees; and then they plucked
The mulberries, lifting hands like lotus-flowers
To the dark clusters under the broad leaves;
And that is why their finger-tips, which glowed
Like delicate opal shells were stained so red.

But when they came into the house again,
Their baskets were still covered with green leaves,
And, under those broad leaves, if you had looked,
You would have seen, not mulberries, but cocoons.

Four thousand years ago, in old Pekin,
The queen and her two daughters wove and spun
Secretly, and embroidered their strange dreams
Through which there always ran one crimson thread
Twisting and trickling through the golds and blues
On those first silken miracles of Cathay.

And they still kept the secret, while the world
Wondered whence those fantastic glories came
To smoulder on their walls.
And then they died.

The centuries passed, the mulberry trees lived on,
And still that secret passed from queen to queen
Like a celestial jewel closely locked
And guarded, in the treasury of a king.

And then, one summer night, a Princess woke
And heard the jargoning of great nightingales,
And opened her bright window to the stars,
Two thousand years ago, in old Pekin.

She heard the leaves breathe and the fountains flow,
Murmuring the same strange music as to-day.
And she was beautiful as an almond spray
In the first month of Spring.

Under her walls
A shadow stirred. She saw her lover stand
With face uplifted, through the dim blue gloom,
In old Pekin, two thousand years ago.

She let her silken ladder lightly down,
And fled with him into the boundless dusk

Of Asia, like a little fluttering moth
Out of a lighted window, into the night.

But, in her silken turban she had hidden
A cluster of mulberry leaves and silk-worm's eggs,
Because, she thought, when I am far away
In India, I will make a loom and weave
My happier memories into happier dawns
And turn my dreams to sunsets, as of old,
Two thousand years ago,
In old Pekin.

" And so the secret, as my father said,"
It was the lad's voice, not the murmuring bees
In the dark lavender—" so the secret spread
Through the great world. . . . There is a curious song,
I heard him sing it once as a nursery rhyme.
He often will hum it aloud, as we walk thro' the fields.
It tells of the magic
Wrapt up in the smallest of things."
" Eh ! Eh ! What a child !
Come, sing me that song," said the Mayor.

Then the boy, as his grey-green eyes, from easel to sitter,
Lifted and dropt, and his deft hand added a wrinkle,
And puffed those pouches under the Mayor's round eyes,
Chanted in undertone, almost as one in a dream,
Aloof and afar, these rhymes, through which I could hear
The lapse of the leaves, in the garden of old Pekin,
And the whisper of lovers through all the blind ages of death,
In a world beyond time, at one with the rhythmical whole.

Was it only the rush of the waves outside, and the pulse
Of the turbines, down in the dark, that shook the frame
Of the world? With what rhythmical purpose?

At one with the pulse
Of the human heart, and the rhythm of tides and stars,
All speaking through each, in the light-foot lilt of a song,
Each speaking through all, and all wedded in music for me!

A princess reigned in China
Two thousand years ago. . . .
And in her secret garden
Great mulberries used to grow,
With crooked boughs and spreading leaves
And deep dark roots below.

And out of those great dusky hearts
In the heart of old Cathay,
She drew the sunset and the dawn . . .
And smiled and stole away.
Two thousand years ago, it was,
And it seems like yesterday.

Far off, on the deck of a ship, like a voice in a dream,
You think they will save her.
Far off, in the thick of the storm,
Then, suddenly, close at hand, through the thunder of waves,
Like a voice in a dream replying,—Who are *They?*

X

ALONE in his own cabin,
But never less lonely than when quite alone,
The poet invoked that other magic now,
Magic that, through a woven order of words,
A subtle arrangement of articulate sounds,
Could wake new values and suffuse his line
With a celestial wonder, till it shone
Like something captured from the eternal world,
Discovered, not composed; revealed, not made;
Rhythmical as the cosmos, with the pulse
Of natural law; yet, by that service, free;
A flawless and inevitable form,
A wingèd phrase of the perfect symphony
Dictated by the heart-beats of that love
Which moves the sun and stars. . . .
The sea went by
Thundering. He did not hear it. . . .
And now he turned the pages of his book
And tried to choose a cluster of lighter songs
For his first reading in that distant land. . . .
And, as he turned them over, he could see
Already, in thought, as through a magic window,
The thronged and radiant hall beside the lake
At Wellesley; or the doors of old Nassau,
With those bronze tigers, where the red-coats passed
Up the grey steps of memory, long ago.
He saw the tower that calls across the sea
To Magdalen; saw the crumbling stones they brought
From Oxford, stones incorporate now for ever

In the new walls that guard the eternal flame.
There was the true America that he loved
As Shelley loved it; there, and at old Yale,
Mother of men, to whom across the wave,
The denizens of the Mermaid Inn have flown
And found, once more, the Elizabethan fire;
There, and in those elm-shadowed whispering ways
At Cambridge, where John Harvard left the books
He brought from Cambridge, England, with the hope
That gleams, as freshly as the may-flower gleams,
Clear-cut in stone, above those gates of youth
In his own country, for all ages now:
When God had carried us safe to our New England;
When we had built our houses; made secure
The needs of life; established civil law;
And raised convenient places for God's worship;
The next thing that we longed for was to advance
Knowledge, and hand it on from sire to son,
Dreading to leave our cause to the forgetful
When we shall lie in dust. . . .
All these he saw,
And many another, touched with the welcoming light
Of friendship, far beyond the weltering flood;
And many a page of April song he turned,
But paused on one which seemed to whisper there
Of stranger powers than when he wrote it first;
Powers that with deeper magic, subtler spells,
Were moving round the ship, in air and sea,
And the deep ether, under the blind storm,
And his own voyaging soul; miraculous powers
That make and shape, sustain and guide the world.
He paused on this, and with a flickering smile,
Remembering how the careless lyric leapt
Once, from a boy's heart, like a blackbird's carol,
Out of a may-tree, murmured it anew.

Wizards

There's many a proud wizard in Araby and Egypt
 Can read the silver writing of the stars as they run;
And many a dark gypsy, with a pheasant in his knapsack,
 Has gathered more by moonshine than wiser men have won;
But *I* know a Wizardry
 Can take a buried acorn
And whisper forests out of it, to tower against the sun.

There's many a magician in Bagdad and Benares
 Can read you—for a penny—what your future is to be;
And a flock of crazy prophets that by staring at a crystal
 Can fill it with more fancies than there's herring in the sea;
But *I* know a Wizardry
 Can break a freckled egg-shell
And shake a throstle out of it, in every hawthorn-tree.

There's many a crafty alchemist in Mecca and Jerusalem;
 And Michael Scott and Merlin were reckoned very wise;
But *I* know a Wizardry
 Can take a wisp of sun-fire
And round it to a planet, and roll it through the skies,
 With cities, and sea-ports, and little shining windows,
And hedgerows and gardens, and loving human eyes. . . .

Those verses would not serve his purpose now.
He had been asked for something they could read
At the ship's concert, in a night or two
If all went well. . . .
 The wireless news was full
Of armaments, and peace; of speeches flashed
From Washington and London; how to end

This armoured drag on ' progress.'
Long ago
He had written something—he remembered it—
That might seem fitting now. Was it too light,
Too hopeful for this war-stunned world of ours ?
He paced the sheltered and deserted deck,
Alone. The verses echoed through his mind,
Recalling that old house above the sea,
The Golden Farm, hushed among tall blue pines,
Where first he wrote them down, in happier days.
Enriched with all those deeper undertones
Which none but he could hear, their silence flowed
Like an old memory of a boyish faith,
And a true purpose, ardent in him then
(When few would hear what all were preaching now,
Above the graves of twenty million dead !)
Thank God, he had written it long before, and joined
The voices that had failed. . . .
Salt, with that mockery, even as it smiled,
The very lightness of the music flowed
In its own harmony with this darkened hour ;
And somewhere, deep in his unconscious mind,
Something was calling, calling through it all,—
Was it from France ? What distant thunder broke ?
Was it in Seventy ? Yesterday ? To-morrow . . . ?
The verses flowed as lightly as the breath
Of the cool sea-wind playing round his brow ;
And what both said was true, not to be mouthed
On any stage ; but true as Nature here.
Although, outside, in darkness and in storm,
The Atlantic powers moved to their own strange dooms,
He walked the sail-screened deck, and that light breath
Of their vast tumult played its part as well
As the spray plays it, when the surge goes by.

* * * * *

In the lost woods of Virginia, I found, at break of day,
An old colonial tavern, by a grass-grown way,
With white porch-pillars where the wild wisteria grew,
Rosy with the dawn-flush, and misty with the dew.

Now I'd been rambling in the woods to find the heart of things;
For all my mind was broken with the wicked ways of kings;
When a low wind shifted all that deep dim bloom,
And showed the golden name above the old *Apollo Room.*

I had found the Raleigh Tavern, and the ghostly door was wide,
And I saw two shadows talking by the dark fire-side,
One was in a laced coat, and one in buff and blue,
And both of them were dead men, with faces that I knew.

Yes: there was Patrick Henry, in an oak arm-chair,
With his long church-warden, and his fiery mop of hair;
And he looked up, grimly: "Mr. Jefferson," he said,
"If Peace has come on earth at last, the Devil must be dead.

"I'm Scots and Welsh; but if *he's* dead, and left no heads to break,
I'm thinking that auld Nick will have a royal Irish Wake;
For the Irish will be feelin' like the lad from Venus-land,
With the olive-buds all sproutin' on the blackthorn in his hand.

"There's just one hope! If half the world agrees that war shall cease,
You'll have to call the Irish up to keep the rest at peace,
But England?"—"Ah," says Jefferson, "we'll not say 'nay,'
If a Saxon chief, named Washington, should lead us on the way.

" When with Adams, Lee, and Stockton, that were England's blood and bone,
We stood for her own freedom, in the face of court and throne;
When we wrenched it from the Hessian; when we sealed our living creed
As the last red scripture, on the scroll of Runnymede;

" There was many a golden Irish lad that followed our Saint George
With his tattered starving armies thro' the snows of Valley Forge. . . ."
" There's an auld cracked Bell," says Patrick, " and it talks in Shakespeare's tongue;
But the bones of the dead men remember and grow young.

" As I saw him, in the darkness, looming up against the skies,
A great ghost, riding, with the battle in his eyes,
I have seen the New World rising, with the splendour of her stars,
And a Captain rides before her, that shall make an end of wars.

" From his tomb by the Potōmac, on his proud white steed,
Well I know who comes to lead us, as of auld he used to lead,
And the drums of the morning up the Rappahannock roll,
'It's the Father of his country, and it's England's living soul.' "

Then softly—very softly—while the shadows died away,
In the ancient Raleigh Tavern, at the dawning of the day,

" By God's good grace," quoth Jefferson, " if both our hearts
be true,
We, who split the world asunder, may unite the world anew."

* * * * *

Far off, in France,
Through rolling mists, the desolate villages,
And lightning-blasted trees—and the long road
Where old Pasteur, all science left behind,
Went driving, driving, driving to the North,
Halting at wayside hospitals, hurrying on,
Seeking and searching like a questing hound,
With eyes of all too human agony, on,
On to the thunder of guns, his grey hair flying,
Like a new Lear, the terrible outcast King
Of human knowledge ; but, in his bursting heart,
Only one cry, " My son ! My son ! My son ! "

XI

The throb of the engine died. The rushing thunder
Of foam around the bows dissolved away.
The great ship drifted through a strange new hush.
Only the wash now of the slow deep seas
Against her towering flanks arose and fell
With that primæval sound the sea-gull heard
On lonely coasts,
Before the birth of man.

All that old mystery, with its rhythmic speech
Encompassed us again, while—for one child,
Out of the wide world's multitudes, one child
The lonely, vivid, quivering centre now
Of that vast round of empty sea and sky,
The concentrated powers of man held back
The Juggernaut wheels of death.

What voice was that?
Quivering with elfin ecstasy, far away,—
What child's tale, what deep legend of old days,
What wounded nightingale lost in the dark woods
Of Time, breathed its blind passion through the storm:

"Where?" said the King,
"Oh, where? I have not found it."
"Here," said the dwarf,
And music echoed "here."
"This infinite circle hath no line to bound it,
Therefore its deep strange centre is everywhere.

Let the earth soar through heaven, that centre abideth;
Or plunge to the pit, His covenant still holds true.
In the heart of a dying bird, the Master hideth;
In the soul of a King," said the dwarf, " and in my soul, too."

Stillness—the dreadful waiting—and our ship,
With that one child, the centre of all things now. . . .

In a hushed corner of the sail-screened deck
The astronomer and the old Franciscan padre
Talked in low voices of that same strange theme,—
Time, Space, and their infinitudes which make
Each point the centre of all. This flying moment,
Infinitudes being equal, stands midway
Between the past and future; and this child,
Infinitudes being equal, lies midway
Between the abyss of stars, and those dark gulfs
Wherein the electrons wheel. So Space and Time,
As Plato, Hegel, Einstein, groped to see,
Dissolve into a shadow of man's mind;
And the one God is ever Here and Now,
God in the heights, and on ten thousand altars,
Revealed to man, when the blind doors are opened,
And the Bread broken, and the incarnate Word
Breathes thro' the worlds which veil Him from our sight,
Est enim Corpus Meum.

XII

The ship rocked idly.
The surgeon, like a shadow,
With grey set face, came out through a shadowy door,
Quickly, on to the deck. He did not see us. He drew
A deep breath of the cold night air.
The padre
Approached him.
"Is all well?"
He shook his head.
"Not——"
"Worse than anyone thought. It was too late.
The child is dead."
There was a stifled cry below,
Faint, far, as the cry of a sea-mew, blindly astray
In the black night. . . .
Then, muffling it, the indifferent engines throbbed
And the great ship moved on its way again,
Steered by its earth-bound compass.
"Poor, poor mother,"
The padre whispered.
And the foam swept by.

"Padre, I have no faith in any creed.
For me,—at death—the human life goes out
Like a snuffed candle. But, if there's any word
Of comfort you can give to that poor woman,
For God's sake go and speak to her."

" Not yet,"
The padre murmured. " No, not yet, my friend."
And, though he said no more, his inmost thoughts
Breathed through me, like a voice.
" The ship moves on,
To its own goal. It takes us all one way,
Living and dead ; and the foam speaks of speed.
And the dark planet spins on its own course
Bearing us back. Look up. The stars are still,
Fixed, fixed and still ; yet they, too, speak of speed.

And neither ship nor stars can move one inch
The nearer to the final end of man,
Ours is a deeper goal, beyond this dream
Of Time and Space ! . . .
Neither the speeding ship
Nor all the rushing seas can move my mind
From its fixed centre. That great arch of sky
Still keeps us in the centre of its round
Wherever we move ; nor can we ever escape
From that dread point, wherein each blade of grass,
Each leaf, each flower, each separate struggling life,
As though beneath the intense blue lens of heaven
It lay alone, concentrates on itself
The gaze of That which only and ever exists
In its own right, beyond. . . ."
" What lies beyond ?
Science has struck a death-blow at the heart
Of all that you believe."
" I answer that
Out of the mouth of Science." . . .

* * * * *

There, at once
The scene dissolved. The veils of Time and Space

Like a blind mist rolled back.
I saw the lights of Paris. I heard the roar
Of trafficking streets. The Mazarin palace flung
Its doors wide open, and my ghost passed through.

There, in that glittering hall, I saw and heard
The Academy of France with all its guests
Assembled to instal their new immortal,
Louis Pasteur, in a death-vacated chair.

It was no dream. The green embroidered coats
Of those who were to live for ever gleamed
Before me; and, among them, in a haze
Of starry decorations, their proud guests,
Plump statesmen, rosy senators, bowed and shrugged,
Puffed out with self-importance. At their sides
Bejewelled wives and white-armed daughters raised
Their rounded mouths like desperate choristers
Trying in vain to pierce the chattering din
And reach a neighbour's ear; for that bright Babel
Sounded as though the reservoirs of speech
In great Gargantua's Dictionary had burst,
And all the words in the world were pouring out
In cataracts, over the drowning eyes of thought.
And yet, it was truth itself they had come to crown
In one whom France had bound to the lonely peak
Where once Prometheus hung, and the eagle of hate
Savaged his heart; till a world elsewhere had caught
The torch that he flung thro' darkness, and forced his land
To acknowledge his truth at last.
And so they acclaimed
An immortal, Louis Pasteur.
A strange, dramatic scene, the antiphonal hour
To an hour when Huxley, at Oxford, struck his blow
For Science, at smooth-tongued Wilberforce.

Here, in France,
The parts were subtly reversed.
In the chief place,
Renan sat smiling, ironically secure
As President of the Academy of France;
Renan, still hearing those deep sunken bells
Of the celestial City, faint and far,
Like the deep chimes of that drowned City of Is
The Breton sailors hear; Renan, so sure
That Science had dissolved his ancient faith
Into a rose-pink myth, would now receive
This uncrowned King of Science, and crown him there
Pasteur, the new immortal. . . .
Renan, superior to all folk-lore now;
The first of pseudo-moderns, sure, so sure,
That Science was his ally through all change,
Had come to hear this master of clear-cut fact
Confirm his musical dilettante prose,
And prove once more that Reason leads the mind
Into a creedless twilight, touching all
That most concerns a man, his purpose here,
The meaning of the world, and his last end.

Slight analyst of Christ; fond amateur
Of Reason, he sat there, in state, and smiled,
Hatching a witty phrase for his own speech
Which should lead subtly on to a minor chord
Of vague emotion, and die on the hushed air
Like wordless music.
On his right, Pasteur,
The master of all those hard and clear-cut facts,
The pioneer, a poor old, time-worn man,
Bent his grey head, and clutched his manuscript,
With trembling hands, as one who felt half-dazed
At thus emerging from the lonely night

Of his long fight for truth, into this blaze
Of glory. A labouring miner who has cut
Through the sheer rock in darkness, and emerged
On bright Olympus to the applause of gods
Were not bewildered more. . . .
What should he say? How thank them for their aid,
Now all was over and his brows were crowned
With light and victory? Victory? Not till death!
Crowned? Not by these, but by the stubborn hands
Of his own proven facts, in the lying face
Of those that would have stoned him, stoned to kill.
How should he tell them when he rose to speak
The things that he had learned in that long night,
The facts, the cold realities he had proved,
Cold as cold iron through the hands and feet. . . .
Renan sat smiling there.

First, as of use and wont, Pasteur must speak
In eulogy of the dead, must pay his debt
To Littré, his forerunner, who had been
The chief disciple of Comte, but lost, at last,
Even that earth-bound faith his master held
In Man, whose godhead dies with his own sun,
And perishes with his planet. . . .
Littré, for whom the visible, tangible world
Was all; but whose departure from it now
Into a world invisible, left one chair
Among the immortals (Oh, ironic Death!)
Thus vacant for the bent and grey Pasteur.

How could he tell them of the thing he saw
Three days ago, upon the dead man's wall. . . .

How could he tell a cynical throng like this
Of what he saw when, anxious for the truth

In its minutest detail, ere he spoke
His mind on Littré, he had visited
The dead man's house, a labourer's cottage rather,
And seen the lowly garden of his delight,
The lilac-tree beneath whose boughs he read
La Fontaine, Horace, Virgil; and that room
Whence, labouring, with the midnight lamp unquenched,
He heard the nightingale and skylark blend
Their notes in one strange carol of night and day.
There, on the bare cold wall of that small room,
Where Littré worked . . . that crucifix.
Not his own. . . .
His wife's, and yet, O doubly then his own. . . .
Far off, through Time and Space, what music breathed,

Quench not in any shrine
The smouldering storax. In no human heart
Quench what love kindled. Faintly though it shine,
Not till it wholly dies the gods depart.

Courage, O conquering soul.
For all the boundless night that whelms thee now
Though suns and stars into oblivion roll,
The gods abide, and of their race art thou.

The moment had arrived, and he must speak.
A brief and quiet throbbing of acclaim
Broke the deep hush. Pasteur was on his feet,
Nervous and awkward, paler than his wont.
The Academician's green embroidered coat
Felt new and strange. Across his breast he wore
The cordon of the Legion. . . .
Far, how far,
Beyond those walls, a child was walking now
Clasping his father's hand. The straight old man,

One of Napoleon's veterans . . . murmuring streams. . . .
Blue hills, how far. . . .
All this was in his voice,
Welled up in him from deep unconscious springs,
As he began to speak . . . of Littré first,
And his achievements in the positive realm
Of Science. To all these he paid his debt
From a full mind. Then, suddenly, he paused,
And the old grey man that had so long explored
Those infinitesimal worlds beneath the lens
Of Science, raised his head.
He did not see
The throng who had come to hear the world explained
In terms of dust, the greater by the less,
Revoking the first law of their own thought
In intellectual arrogance. His voice
Rang clearly out. "*At the chief point of all*
This positivism fails."
The hush grew tense.
Renan sat smiling there.
"*Because it fails*
To take into account another fact,
The most important, positive fact of all,
The Infinite. . . .

I can give no formula
For its expression here."
Far off, in time
A murmur from Stagira, gathering strength
And depth from Aquin, breathed, *The order of Nature*
Is not the order of Thought; for we explain
The first things by the last. The maximum genus
Which is both first and last, explains what man
Finds least and lowest. It struck—to the very heart
Of Darwin's failure. They would not understand,

Though he spoke volumes. He must choose his terms.
Renan sat smiling there. It was the Age
Of Doubt. True thought was dead. They did not hear,
They could not read one thought except their own.
Pasteur would choose and use their own vague terms
And still refute that smile.

" What is beyond ? "

His voice rang out, as from a bursting heart,
Deep, struggling to keep back those deepest things
That, simple minds know best, because extremes
In these things meet, as God in childhood dwells.
What is beyond ? Trace man into the dust
Descend into those infinitesimal gulfs
Of microscopic life ; or mount through Space
And see ten thousand universes move
In order round you ; never shall you escape
From that one question every child can ask,
And answer, out of the Light that dwells within.

" What is beyond ? " The mind of man, urged on
By an invincible passion, never will cease
To ask, What is beyond ?
Vain to reply
' Unbounded Time and Space, unbounded grandeur.'
Vague phrases, for the one most absolute Fact.
He who discerns the Infinite in his heart
Transcends all human science, and affirms
More of the supernatural than is found
In all the miracles.
It is forced upon us.
None can avoid it. Everywhere in the world
Behind all facts, this ultimate mystery
Remains, incomprehensible.
When this vision
Dawns on our human minds, we can but kneel."

Renan still smiled that suave complacent smile
Of *a priori* doubt and self-conceit,
So sure that, intellectually, he held
A more Olympian height, wherefrom to lisp
" Come unto me, all ye that are most witty,
Refresh my soul with epigrams."
Pasteur
Lowered his voice a little, and spoke on.

" *The idea of God—what is it but the sense*
Of this dark mystery of the Infinite One;
Whereby, deep down in every human heart,
The supernatural dwells.
As long as this eternal mystery weighs
On human thought, so long mankind will build
Temples to heaven, whether their God be known
As Brahma, Allah, Jahveh, or as Christ.
And, on the pavement of those temples, men
Will be found kneeling, prostrate, all their world
Annihilated, and in dust around them,
Before this thought, the Infinite."
For a moment,
The rows of listening faces faded out;
And he, Pasteur, who had come to speak in praise
Of positive science, and himself was crowned
For his discoveries in the dwindling gulf
Of infinitesimal things, no longer knew
If Renan smiled or not. He cared no more.
The voice with which he spoke was not his own,
And, in the expectant silence, there were those
Who heard the thought he did not choose to speak:

" *This Infinite is not the mere unbounded,*
Dying away through its unclosed horizons
Into an endless void. The highest name,

And so the truest, given to it on earth,
Is that of the Perfect. This, indeed, is bound
By its own character; and discerned, though dimly,
And only in fragments, through the beauty of Art;
But, sometimes, more completely, in those hours
When, for a vision of right, the spirit of man
Stands up alone against a mocking world
And drinks defeat like victory.
Once, at least,
Well nigh two thousand years ago, outstretched
On the one frame that, pointing opposite ways,
Can image still that ultimate paradox
Where at the centre of the whole creation
The one impossible Fact sustains the whole,
And, through the universe, on His cross of law,
The Maker still redeems what He has made,
The Infinite spoke to man."
Then, in a voice
Filled with all this, as at the appointed note
A blind musician is caught up and forced
By the invisible orchestra around him
To play his part, his words rang out again,—

"*Blessed is he who bears within his breast*
A God, a true ideal, and obeys it,
Whether through Art, or Science, or a life
Of simple goodness. There is the deep source
Of all good thoughts and actions. It reflects
Light from the Infinite."

He ceased, and took his place. The crowd was hushed.
Renan, still smiling, turned his papers over,
And then, still seated, in his loftier chair,
As President, cooed his airy answer out,
An answer couched in terms with but one aim,

To ensure that all his light ironic praise
Should fall, as from an intellectual height,
On this up-struggling genius.
" Sir, we know
That we are hardly competent to judge
The glory of your work," he cooed and purred.
" But there's a greatness, quite apart from this—
Which our experience of the human mind
Must recognise at once." The smile conveyed,
The very tone and gesture seemed to assume,
That a more special greatness was his own,
And gave him power to judge its lesser forms.
" We recognise this greatness in the work
Of widely various minds. In Galileo,
Molière, Pascal, Michael Angelo,
We see it shining,—something that can give
To poets, the sublime ; to orators
Enchantment ; to philosophers the depths
Of reason ; and to scientists the power
Of—divination.
Sir, that common fount
Of true and beautiful work ; that sacred fire ;
That indefinable truth which kindles Art,
Literature, Science, we have found in *you.*
Sir, it is genius. No one ever walked
So surely through the elemental maze
Of Nature. Sir, your scientific life
Is like " (he smiled) " a little luminous tract
In the great night of the Infinitesimal,
The last abyss, where life itself is born.
But Truth, sir, Truth, sir, is a great coquette.
She shrinks from too much passion, and will prove
More yielding, sometimes, to indifference."
(The very cadence murmured ' even as mine.')
" She escapes when she seems caught, but gives herself

To those who wait; reveals her loveliness
When our farewells are said; but goes her way
Inexorably, when loved with too much fervour. . . .'

" Beautiful, beautiful," breathed the senators' wives;
And all their daughters' eyes were on his face.
Then, by a swift suggestion, subtly masked
In compliment, he indirectly affirmed
His loftier sphere of abstract intellect.

" Nature, sir, is plebeian. She insists
On labour; calloused hands and care-worn brows.
You are happy in your certainties. For me
There is a charm in doubt. We shall not find
The secret of that exquisite enigma
Which so torments and charms us. Need we care,
When even the hem of the garment we have raised
Reveals such beauty. Allow me to recall
Your own discovery, sir, of right and left
Tartaric acids. Are there not some minds
That, like those acids, never can unite;
Minds, that, to use your own comparison, sir,
Are like the gloves required by opposite hands;
Minds that can meet, but never be interchanged,
Though both are needed.
Sir, you look beyond,
And you discern a light in death itself.
Death, which to Littré, was a function only. . . ."

(*O, words, words, words, how emptily they flowed*
Through the deep aching mind of old Pasteur!)

" The last and quietest function of our flesh,
Death seems to me most odious and insane
When its cold touch is laid upon the heart
Of virtue and of genius. In great souls
There is a voice which cries unceasingly

'Goodness and Truth must ever be your goal.
Sacrifice all to these.' But, when we obey
That siren voice and reach the trysting-tree
Where the reward should wait us, there is nothing.
The vague Consoler fails us at the last.
Philosophy, which had promised us the key
To the dark riddle of death, averts her face,
Muttering a lame apology, like a man
Avoiding an old friend who asks for alms.
The bright ideal that had led us on
To the thin fringe of the last air we breathe
Dies like a marsh-light at the supreme hour
When we most need and look for it. Nature's end
Has been attained; a cold experiment made;
Then, with a harlot's gesture, the Enchantress
Leaves our senility to the hooting birds
Of darkness. I agree, sir, that we owe,
And ought to pay, our little debt of virtue
To the implacable Power that treats us thus;
But, while we pay it, sir, I also think
We have the right, upon our own account,
To add a little irony."

Assured
That he had proved his own pre-eminent wit,
Renan would say no more.

Pasteur's grey head
Was bowed. He did not smile. He thought it strange,
That men should use their irony on a theme
Which had so haunted many a master-mind
And filled with light so many a simple heart.
The applause grew faint and distant, like a dream.
He hardly knew what followed; for he heard
With his own innermost mind, another voice
That tingled through the gulfs of Space and Time
Like star-light, the far voice of one who walked

Through Konigsberg—a small dry clockwork man,
Angular as his own cocked hat, and brown
As his own coffee, who, while his clockwork feet
Clicked through the market-place so punctually
That townsmen told the time by him, would range
In his own thought, through kingdoms beyond Time;
And, though the clouds of that high region swept
Around him often, through their rifts he caught
Gleams of eternal radiance. Though he failed
To build a mightier fane with his own hands,
Unconsciously, and even against his will,
He still confirmed the strength of that which stands
In saecula saeculorum, while he groped
Through Nature, and discovered in the laws
Of his dark mind, an end above her own;
And higher yet, an end where both accord,
And bear one witness to the Supreme Good;
One vast synthetic witness, from the law
That bowed his head beneath the wheeling stars,
And from the deeper law in man's own soul,
Whose strange, imperative whisper, far within,
Affirmed, 'Thou *must*, despite thine own desires,
Though all thy hopes be shattered by this choice,
Thou *must* uphold the right; and, in thy power
To hear this absolute whisper and defy
What seemed the wheel of Nature, thou hast proved
Thy freedom, in a loftier order now;
Proved to thine own true self the eternal strength
Of its true fortress, founded on a rock
In kingdoms of reality, beyond
This world of fleeting shadows. Thou hast proved
Though blind men cannot see, or deaf men hear,
The three great affirmations which alone
Can save mankind from utter chaos now,
God, Freedom, Immortality.'

XIII

In a small cabin, lit by a single lamp.
The poet, rapt and tense, had dropt his pen.
Whose Mind dictated, or whose Will compelled
His half-unconscious music? Not his own.
He had written as one that listens and strains long
To hear a distant harmony. It was there:
One *motif* in the world-wide symphony;
A form of truth, eternal in the heavens,
Not to be made with hands, composed by minds,
But to be found, discovered, phrase by phrase,
In its abiding Beauty.
Could he grasp
The whole—record its half-remembered notes,
Each by a golden logic leading on
And up, to a new wonder; Music then
Had opened the last blinding doors of knowledge,
And shrivelled him in that last consummate splendour,
The Beatific Vision.

Death, that had hushed the ship for half an hour
As with a strange new presence, was to him
No stranger, but a comrade of his thought,
Touching him daily, whispering in his ear;
And all his pity for that stricken child
Only renewed a memory and a pang,
Only confirmed a sad foreknowledge now
That ached in him from boyhood.
He knew it then;
And, afterwards, he knew that not till Death

Struck and the mortal body of one he loved
Lay there before him in a strange content,
So still that, by a deeper contrast now,
With the imperceptible gathering of the dark,
And the unseen moving air, it seemed to breathe ;
Never till one rapt form, in that strange bliss
Lay smiling, through the mists of his own grief,
At an invisible heaven, had he discerned
That what he loved was separable from earth.
There, though the mortal body had not yet lost
One shining atom in its frozen sleep,
And the still exquisite face looked up, unchanged,
From those untroubled waves of lustrous hair ;
Something had vanished utterly from the world,
Whose lightest whisper, half an hour ago
Out-valued all earth's kingdoms. Stocks and stones
Endured. Could this, then, perish like a flash
Struck from a flint. The mortal shell remained.
The cold and stiffening fingers could be touched,
Claspt, kissed, and idly stained with human tears ;
But, even in that last agony he knew
That he stretched out his blind imploring hands
To an immortal fugitive.
Then, oh then,
He clutched at hints and whispers from beyond,
Messages from the dead ! He turned a page
And read, as he remembered his own grief,
Strange words that love had whispered to him then :

I

Never again the heaven in those clear eyes,
The dew, the glory, and the unfaltering love ;
Never again those stars of Paradise
Which watched my labouring darkness from above ;

Never again, O never again, the look
That like the sunlight blessed me unaware;
Innocence wiser far than any book,
And silent faith out-soaring any prayer.

Never again the hand that moved in mine
With that quick pulse when love could find no word,
Never again the white robe and the shrine
And those dear songs that none but I have heard,
Laughed out at dawn, lost songs of childish years,
Remembered now, in darkness, and blind tears.

II

Every morning, a bird
Alights on the topmost bough of the silver birch-tree
Between the house and the lake,
And sits there alone for an hour,
Looking in, looking in at my window.

It may be a blackbird or thrush,
But the light at that hour is deceptive.
I only know it is different from all other birds.

It utters no cry, no song.
I have never seen it alighting.
And yet, when the sky is like apple-bloom over the lake,
And my eyes have grown used to the light,
It is always there,
At the very same time by the sun,
A little while after daybreak.
It always chooses the same bare bough,
And it sits there alone, for an hour,
Looking in, looking in at my window.

Is it so that our lost ones return
With eager inquisitive love,

Using strange eyes for an hour,
To glance through an open window
And discover how much we have changed?

It is daybreak now,
And the bird is not here;
But strange and terrible thoughts bewilder one's mind
Before it is half awake,
And my heart sinks,
With fear of some evil that may have befallen my bird.
Wings rustle.
The topmost bough of the silver birch-tree
Suddenly dips and sways
And all is well.
Dark on an apple-bloom sky
A silent bird
Sits there alone, looking in,
Looking in, looking in at my window.

III

Messages? Like the pagans of old time
I grope for messages in the flight of birds;
A book that opens at your favourite rhyme;
A page turned down; a passing stranger's words;
Till in this wide world's ordered mazes now
No leaf can fall, no bird can come and go,
No ray of sunlight touch a child's fair brow,
But with a secret meaning that I know.
I prayed that, if you could, you'd let me hear
The name you gave me, and none other knew;
And that same evening, standing by my chair,
A child, on tiptoe, whispered it for you;
A stranger's child, not knowing what she said,
Whispered that happy name. I bowed my head.

At times, it almost seemed as though a light
Could shine through rifts in the dissolving veil
Of Nature, and strange meanings glimmered through
That others could not see. Even now, he heard
And saw, beyond all hearing and all sight,
Messages flung through darkness from afar,
Wild hieroglyphic hints, like those quick cries
Of prophecy, those crooked lightnings flashed
Through Pagan skies, before the Word took flesh
And the Infinite God performed that only Act
Wherein He fully expressed infinitude
And rounded His own infinite universe
By being born of that which He had made.
In vain he strove
To seize and hold, through all the shows of Time,
The intolerable messenger of God,
Who, cloaked with sordid shreds of mortal clay,
Disguised in rags of this material world
Burns thro' the veil and smoulders thro' the cloud,
As beauty everywhere; yet at one touch
Shrivels the wrestling sinews of the mind.

Messages,—from the dead?
Thou hast not heard them? No;
Nor shalt thou ever hear
What whisperings come and go.
But, when thou hast bowed thy head
In the quietude of despair,
When thou hast ceased to listen,
A meaning shall draw near
And startle thee like a light,
From valleys of surprise
Opening, out of sight
Behind thee; for 'tis written
They must not meet thine eyes.

Between the effect and cause
They dare not intervene.
From the unseen to the seen
Their roads are Nature's laws;
But, through them, they can breathe
What none could speak aloud;
And quietly inter-wreathe
Through sea-wave and white cloud
Strange gleams of loveliness
Whose deep unearthly drift
Thou couldst not even guess;
Light that no eyes can see;
Music no ear hath heard;
Till they strike home to thee
Through star and sunset rift
Or the cry of a wandering bird;
And where the rainbow shone
Across unshadowing skies,
Clear as through tear-lashed eyes
Thy love smiles, and is gone.

Rememberest thou that hour,
Under the naked boughs,
When, desolate and alone,
Returning to thy house,
Thou stoodst amazed to find
Dropt on the lintel-stone
Which thou hadst left so bare,
A radiant dew-drenched flower—
And thou couldst never know
Whose hand had dropt it there,
Fragrant and white as snow,
To save thy soul from hell?
Yet, in thy deepest mind,
Thou *didst* know, and know well.

Not thine to understand
How the two worlds accord,—
The will of Love, our Lord,
With this dark wheel of Time.
Yet thou didst hear them chime
Like one deep Sanctus bell
For the pure Host revealed
In the exquisite miracle
Of that white chance-dropt flower;
A flower from a known field,
And dropt by a mortal hand;
But, breathing its wild dew,
Oh, simply as tears flow,
Thou didst most surely know
The hand from which it fell
Was thy lost angel's, too.

The implacable law was there; and yet he knew
That, though the world, like music, moved in law
Its notes are not mechanical, but express
The Spirit of its Creator, who unfolds
His infinite purpose and compassionate will
With every touch, finding in law itself
His perfect freedom to extemporise
Fugues that redeem the chords that went astray,
Tones that transfigure like the touch of Christ,
And providential harmonies that receive
The breaking wave of melody into a tide
Of deeper power and purpose, where it wakes
Into new life.
. There's not a wisp of cloud
Or flickering shadow of a summer leaf
But lends its delicate note to the infinite range
Of possible modulations, the reserves
From which, at need, the Master-Player draws

His natural-supernatural power to glide,
In absolute freedom, through the laws He made;
To keep them, yet transcend them; and so work
His living Personal Will.
An earth-bound age,
This age of the machine, may see in law
That mechano-morphic image of itself,
A blind monistic web, wherein mankind
Is jerked by strings like crudest jack-a-clocks.
As though the death-watch, ticking in the wood
Under the keys of the organ, should declare
That Bach's great choral Passion meant no more
Than clicking wooden keys, and that an eye
Which sees their patterned movements from below
Sees the bleak naked truth, and can despise
The vague hypothesis of a Mind beyond
The wooden frame-work. But in that deep realm
Infinite, inexhaustible, though law
Still runs through all, the Music-maker still
Works through the law His own deep miracles;
For, as the will of man can lift the hand
Against the pull of the planet, higher laws
Can sway each lesser system to new ends.
Height over height of law, through all the grades
Of hierarchic heaven, the law still runs;
Though every height, in its new splendour seems
An utter miracle to the grade below;
The flower a miracle to the lifeless earth;
The moth a miracle to the wingless flower;
Man, on his knees, in dark cathedral aisles,
A miracle to the burning jungle-beast;
And the unconditioned Power that made them all
A miracle to His universe. Thus the law
Climbs to His freedom, and sets the spirit free
Which by earth's dull mechanic law seemed bound;

For law itself, through its own changelessness,
Being steadfast as the memory of God,
Is Freedom's only surety, and the road
Whereon alone the spirit of man has power
To choose that goal and walk with surety to it,
Beyond the flaming ramparts of this world.
So let the new monistic moderns take
Music for clue and golden analogue,
Not that blind web of wooden puppetry
Pulled by material strings;
But Music, with its infinite subtlety,
Moving the soul, as when love speaks to love
In silence.
This deep constancy of law
What is it but the covenant of our God
That His eternal Memory will retain
All that has ever been, or yet shall be;
The unchangeable scroll of judgment that has lost
No vanished sun, no atom, in the mists
Of all the endless ages.
(*Far away*
A voice breathed, 'not one bird or leaf can fall
Beyond your Father's care.')
The implacable law
Is God's own seal on all that we hold dear;
For Resurrection, in the eternal Mind,
Is but Remembrance. Into the world-wide light
Of Memory there, His Memory, not our own,
Our dead shall rise, out of the gulfing grave
Of Time, out of that blind forgetful deep,
With all their own lost memories in their eyes,
In an eternal region.
Then shall law
(Law that has never broken one frail link
In its long chain; the seeming callous law

Whose cruelty closed the melody of each life,
And gave it form by closing it) appear
As Love at last, whereby the melody lives
In its own form for ever. . . .
With trembling hands
He turned the pages of that worn old script
He wrote so long ago, unconscious then
Of all the meaning that those words might hold.
Messages from the dead! He read, through tears,—
And there was one that moved like light in light
Before me there,—Love, human and divine,
That can exalt all weakness into power,—
Whispering, 'Take this deathless torch of song,'
Whispering, but with such faith that even I
Might call on Love to guide me, while I sang
Of those who caught the pure Promethean fire
One from another, each crying as he went down
To one that waited, crowned with youth and joy,
'Take thou the splendour. Carry it out of sight,
Into the great new age I must not know,
Into the great new realm I must not tread.'

XIV

In her dark cabin, the stricken mother knelt
By her dead child. Only ten yards away
In a dark cabin, a happier mother lulled
Her wakeful child to sleep; a rose-lipped child
Hugging a Teddy Bear, and strangely alive
To the unwonted silence of the ship.
Tell me another rhyme, then, and I'll try.
Please, mummy, the one about buckets and ships at sea,
The childish treble piped; and, answering it,
The mother's low soprano quietly crooned:

Buckets and spades and a ship at sea
Are very fine things in their way, maybe;
And the woods look gay when the boughs are green,
But the very best things have never been seen.

Nobody ever has weighed or caught
One glimpse, with his eyes, of your happiest thought;
Or walked in white where your prayers have been,
For the very best things have never been seen.

There is much to be said for an ark, one feels;
And almost as much for a horse on wheels;
And the king has a crown (and so has the queen)
But the very best things have never been seen.

When the great winds blow and the sere leaves fall,
Hide close, little elf, we can laugh at them all!
If I whisper one word you will know what I mean;
For the very best things have never been seen.

One word whispered—strange, across the night
Deeper than any wireless message thrilled
The soundless voice of Aquin, one deep chord
Sustaining that light song with undertones
Profound as death, in the innermost heart of the world:

Visus, tactus, gustus,
In te fallitur.
Sed auditu solo
Tuto creditur.

And then the voice of the child again, " One more,
Please—please—one more—and then I'll go to sleep.
The one about the grey wall in the garden,
The wall that had a picture on it, mummy,
A picture that had turned into a window,
And showed a lovely face."
" Ah, yes, I know,
The Invisible Garden. Cuddle your head down
Here, on the pillow, then; and I will say it;
Now, close your eyes." And softly as the sound
Of fir-trees, when a breath at evening moves
Their nodding plumes in a little sheltered glen
Among the lonely hills, the mother crooned:

You have never seen my garden,—
There are strange roses here,—
Five beds of sunset roses,
Afloat on the soft air.

Once in this happy garden,
A dial marked the hours.
But there is no more sorrow
Among my thoughtful flowers.

And, at the end of the garden,
 Clasped on the rose-grey wall,
I see, above the roses,
 The loveliest flower of all.—

A plaque enwreathed with sunset,
 White on a ground of blue,
No della Robbia dreamed it;
 For here all dreams come true;

No plaque, but a bright window,
 In a wall of the unseen,
And one that sits within it,
 A maiden and a queen.

Pure white on blue, our Lady,
 The Child upon her knee,
Stretching his little arms out,
 To pluck more flowers for me;

Stretching his arms out gently,
 To tall celestial flowers. . . .

The dial marks no longer the shadow of passing hours. . . .

The sunset quietly deepens,
 The night will soon be here.
The stars will see my roses
 Afloat on the soft air.

I am not afraid of darkness.
 All mercy and all grace
Are shining through that window,
 And I shall see her face.

You have never seen my garden. . . .

'*Hush! Fast asleep! Good night, dear chick, good night!*'
And, in that other room—*Asleep! Asleep!*
(*Through streaming tears*) '*Good night, dear heart, good night!*'

XV

THE turbines throbbed. The huge Atlantic surge
Went seething past the port-holes. All was dark.
I heard the ship's bell ringing in the night,
The cry of the watch, " All's well." But all night long
I faced that mystery of a vaster deep
Whereon no mortal mind can ever sail
To any haven, till it dares embark
On yet another Ship, and be enclosed,
Cabined, confined, by bulwarks that shut out
The vastness that would drown it.
As a man
Must shape a cup to drink from, so the mind
Must use its finite symbols to enclose
The eternal vintage of the infinite truth ;
Whereof one little draught enlightens more
Than all that human arrogance must lose
If with its naked hands it madly attempt
To grasp the rushing flood. It was for this
God made His finite creatures, and enclosed
Our human love in forms of roseate flesh,
That we might slowly learn, with human eyes,
To spell His infinite meanings ; till, at last,
As when a child has learned to walk, it needs
No fettering aid ; or when the Temple is built
And the strong pillars between the cherubim
Support the cedar roofs, o'erlaid with gold,
The mortal scaffoldings where the masons worked

Are stripped away, and man's immortal soul,
Its wings full-grown, its elementary laws
All mastered, stands up radiant in the light
Of heaven, to share the Godhead of His love,
And serve with Him, in power.
There, only there
In that deep inner kingdom, which the fool
Accounts a world of dreams, abides the truth.
Yet man still seeks it on the dwindling road
Where Science traces great things back to less
Till all runs out in nothing, which the fool
Accounts the sole reality,—as of old.

Reality, and Reality—how we grope
And clutch at shadows in the shadowy flux
Of the unsubstantial universe, O God.
There was a time when Science walked on earth
And found it " solid " ; looked on the blind bulk
Of matter, as the one sure final stuff
Which, through all change, endured, imperishable ;
While that invisible thought which fills no space,
And is not weighed or measured, and that strange Ego
Which, while it lives, through every bodily change,
Remembers and controls, and half-creates
The little sensuous scheme of colour and sound
We call our world, that central, personal *I*,
Can vanish utterly. . . .
Oh, for a true Copernicus of the mind
Who shall reverse this mockery. As of old,
Men thought their planet was the central stage
Of the universal drama, fixed and flat,
And found it whirling, like a pellet of dust
Through boundless night, so now—this earth, this flesh,
This matter again dissolves, dissolves, dissolves,
Melts at a more than mortal Hamlet's cry,

Into electric systems, whirling coils
Of protons and electrons; which, at last
Under the scrutiny of the invisible mind
Are merged into the invisible world again
And rest with all their bodiless movements there
On That which only has the power to move,—
The Living Will. Whose Will, O God, but Thine?
Our minds are restless till they rest in Thee.

There, and there only, is the final Cause
And Origin of the world, the Last and First.
There, and there only is the secret found
Of that vast order which the astronomers saw
Ruling each atom as it rules the stars,
When to create and shape and paint one petal
In one brief April flower, a myriad atoms,
Each atom in itself a universe
Of constellations, must in order climb
And wheel to their own stations in a scheme
Of intellectual beauty. The mind's eye
Can see them, radiant armies moving up
Through boundless night, to make one delicate point
Of colour, in a single wayside flower.
But Oh, what poet's hand on earth shall paint them?

Up-whispered by what Power,
Deeper than moon or sun,
Must each of the myriad atoms of this flower
To its own point of the coloured pattern run;

Each atom, from earth's gloom,
A clean sun-cluster driven
To make, at its bright goal, one grain of bloom,
Or fleck with rose one petal's edge in heaven?

What blind roots lifted up
This sacramental sign
Transmuting their dark food in this wild cup
Of glory, to what heavenly bread and wine?

What Music was concealed,
What Logos in this loam,
That the celestial Beauty here revealed
Should thus be struggling back to its lost home?

Whence was the radiant storm,
The still up-rushing song,
That built of formless earth this heavenly form,
Redeeming, with wild art, the world's blind wrong;

Unlocking everywhere
The Spirit's wintry prison,
And whispering from the grave, "Not here! Not here!
He is not dead. The Light you seek is risen!"

But where, in this dissolving scheme, to pause
And read its meanings, where to halt and see
The picture of the cosmos? Is it here
On this world's coloured surface, in the scheme
That children know, of fields and flowers and birds
And kindly human faces? Is it there,
Along the dwindling road that Science treads,
Where flowers dissolve into electric mists,
And even the face of dying love dies out
Into a cloud of atoms. Better far
To walk with children through this present world,
Clear as a coloured picture-book, than lose
The light upon that face; for in God's mercy,
It may be that His best of meanings here
Lies nearest to us. Yet the mind runs back

Along those dwindling roads, explaining still
The greater by the less, until they reach
On every line of thought, that vanishing point
Where all runs out in absolute mystery.
There, at the last, seeking for that which *Is*
In its own right, and needs no other cause;
Where even the vanishing atom cries aloud
'I am, I am, yet have no right to be'
(For only Nothingness ever had that right,
Except by that mind-shattering Miracle
Of ultimate Being,—the one impossible Fact
Which *is*, and lives, unfolding worlds on worlds
Where Nothingness ought to be) there, Science meets
The fundamental paradox. . . .
Reaches the final contradictory crux
Where all its long descending roads must turn.
There stands the Gate, fine as a needle's eye,
Through which the mind must pass, and find the roads
Upon the further side of that strange point
Ascending, once again, to Thought and Will;
Ascending, till—as water finds its level—
It finds a height co-equal with the peaks
Of human thought; and infinitely higher,
Because that world beyond evolved our own;
And we must find, upon the summits there,
A self-subsistent Cause, the eternal Fount
Of all that flowed into our world with Christ,
And showed us, in His Face, the Face of God.

'Did His creation, then, involve descent,
Renunciation, Sacrifice in Heaven,
A Calvary at the very heart of things,
Wherein the Eternal Passion still enacts
In an eternal world what mortal eyes
Saw dimly on one shadowy hill of Time?

Once, once, ascending on those distant roads
Beyond our world, as in a dream, I came
Into a shining country, where I saw
A radiant throng, whose eyes in their clear depths
Held all the heavens of beauty, mirrored there
In ecstasy, as in a myriad pools
The splendour of the indivisible sun
Is mirrored, and the Godhead of all worlds
Descends and shines within a myriad souls,
In each a separate sacramental flame,
In each entire, the living form of God,
Super-substantial Life. They looked on me
And all that had seemed ghostly in their guise
Was now the very flesh and blood of life,
Firm as the ultimate forms of beauty and truth,
While all the things that I had touched on earth
Changed to intangible shadows. . . .
Then, as it seemed, the innermost Silence breathed,
More instantly than music through my soul,
The very voice of heaven,—*Be of good cheer.*
I have overcome the world.
I could not see
The Form that stood before me as I rose;
For this world's darkness like a midnight cloud
Still hid the eternal Splendour from these eyes;
But, at those words, a river of new strange tears
Dissolved my darkness into heavenly light,
And I beheld Him, not as eyes behold,
But as Love sees the light upon a face
Whereto the world is blind.
I saw that Light;
And as a ship-wrecked man that would not breathe
His fear while danger threatens wife or child
Lest he should break their courage with his own,
But, when the peril is over, sobs out all,

My heart broke, crying dumbly, not in words,
All that dumb tears could speak,—
" Blood on the way !
Blood on the way ; those agonies in the dark ;
Cruelties ; madness ; evil setting its heel
On goodness ; all the pangs, the desolate pangs
Of grief ; the poor bowed head beside the grave ;
Was there no way but this ? "
He looked at me,
And whispered, once again, " I *am* the Way."

Then, as a myriad flames will quiver and burn
In one rich jewel's blood-red heart, I saw
In His own wounded hands and feet and side
The wounds of all the world.
All the wild pangs
Of all earth's wars, all the red throes of Time,
All the long travail of Creation throbbed
Within those wounds. As in each rose on earth
Myriads of atoms, each a universe
Ordered to music, move ; wounds of the bird
Under the falcon's beak ; wounds of the fawn
Under the tiger's fangs ; wounds of mankind
Grappling in armies on that road of pain,
From earth's blind jungles up to Calvary's height ;
Myriads of wounds ; myriads of pangs were there ;
Each like a separate flame within His wounds ;
Rhythmical throes ; not chaos now, not strife,
Not even grief as mortals think of grief ;
But the strong music of the eternal Passion
Throbbing from hell to heaven in His own frame.
As the sea breaks in rhythm against its shores,
As the stars move in music through the sky ;
As the heart throbs in man, all throbbed in Him,
The eternal God made flesh, the Incarnate Word,

The Logos of the evolving universe.
The iron of His world-ruling law was driven
By the strong doom of His world-ruling will
Through his own Body upon the eternal cross
Of His creative sacrifice in heaven;
And dark as death on His death-conquering brow
The whole world's thorns were woven to make His crown.

XVI

About the break of day,
When the slow breakers of the Atlantic crumbled
The crimson East through all their crests of foam,
I walked along the long wet shining deck
Breathing the salt strange freshness.
In the bows,
I saw a quiet throng, the throng I sought,
Bowing their heads to pass through a low doorway,
As though they knew their purpose, not as those
Who drift, but like strong swimmers to a goal
Through this world's idle fashion. As they entered,
And from their brows this outer daylight faded,
There was a strange new light on every face
As though they entered an unearthly chart-room
Wherein the secret splendour of our voyage
Must now be breathed to a few.
I followed them in,
And found them kneeling there before an altar
Spread with a linen cloth, whiter than snow.
(*Yea, though your sins be scarlet*—in my heart
The strange voice breathed,—*they shall be white as snow.*)
Lighted with candles, whose unwavering flames
Were of one order with those breathless fires
Which burn for ever in the Eternal City,
On earth, and in the heavens; and all were lit
From One Eternal Splendour, unto whom
All constellations burn; but here and now,
In little, those steadfast microcosmic fires
Held more significance for the mind of man

Than all the stars that move across the night
In their material order. Those twin flames
With that dark Crucifix, standing in the midst
Of that pure altar, on the moving ship,
Marked but a moving shrine in one vast Fane;
And, as we moved, behind them I could see,
Through a broad window, the great heaving ocean
And the unmoving sky.
Wherever we moved
We moved not from the centre of that circle
Which had no bounds, and always held us there
Moving, yet motionless under the still regard
Of that all-seeing heaven.
I heard a voice
Breathing through Time in that now timeless tongue
Which, being what Death calls dead, can never die,—
Tuis fidelibus, Domine, vita mutatur. . . .
For unto Thy faithful, Lord, their life is changed
Not taken away; and their brief earthly abode
Being here dissolved, there is prepared another. . . .
Aeterna in coelis habitatio—
Eternal in the heavens.
Therefore, with angels,
Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, and the host
Of the whole heavenly army without end
We hymn thy glory.
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus. Heaven and earth are full
Of Thy pure glory.
Then the heights and depths
Met in one point,—I saw the host upraised,
Above the struggling sea, against the sky,
Gathering a million thoughts into one centre,
With all those cloud-like drifting earth-bound dreams
Of *Something far more deeply interfused*

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns;
Closed in Reality now. That living Will
Whereby this coloured pageant of the world
In each material and electric atom
Is here and now sustained,—a myriad dreams
Brought to one lucid instance, one clear Fact
By that far Voice,—*In Memory of Me.* . . .
Brought to one present, living, personal Act,
By that far Will which, through the severing years,
Upraised that symbol, using mortal hands
Of flesh and blood, as His own instruments,
Through all those distances of Time and Space,
Here, now, to break that Bread and pour that Wine
Whereon He fed Who feeds us.
Time and Space
Dissolved. . . . Two thousand years ago, this Act
On earth (and in the heavens, before all worlds);
Foreshadowed His own passion to create
Life that might share His own on high at last,
And, by His own transfiguring entrance here,
Ennoble the dark Nature He had made,
Stooping to Man, that men might rise to God.
There, as that host, upraised against the sky,
Bowed every head, I saw ten thousand shrines,
Ten thousand altars, in the self-same Act
Made one, and shadowing forth that Act in heaven
Before which all those heavenly armies kneel. . . .
All these and more made one by that one sign,
One thin white disk upraised against the sky,
There, in one strict concentring point at last,
Closed all the thoughts and aims of earth and heaven,
Shone the one signal that could never change,
The ultimate sea-mark of our voyaging souls.
Behind that Act, two thousand years ago
On earth, and in the heavens before all worlds

Stood, and for ever stands, the eternal Christ,
Whose Presence is not separate from His Act,
Because, in Him, Substance and Will are one,
Breaking that Bread whereof His body was made,
In union and communion with man's own;
A sacramental sign, earth's common Bread,
Bread of a thousand grains, compact in one,
To feed that flesh wherewith the soul of Christ
Was clothed on earth, as man's own soul is clothed;
And, as the living soul of man on earth
Is here and now incorporate into Christ,
Becomes His Body anew.
Time, Space, dissolved.
The eternal Logos, ordering the whole world,
The incarnate Word, in sacrament with man,
Breathed through Creation, with His instant voice,
Intelligible at last, as Love, not Death. . . .

Now, and for ever, God makes heaven and earth. . . .

Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. . . .

I am the Resurrection, and the Life.

DEDICATION

TO MARY ANGELA

Under the Pyrenees,
Where the warm sea-wind drifts thro' tamarisk boughs,
There is a lonely house upon a hill-top
That I shall never forget or see again.

I shall not see that garden, filled with roses,
On the high sun-burnt plateau, girdled round
With that low parapet, on the lonely hill-top,
By sunlight, or by moonlight, ever again.

In that lost garden stands a little chapel,
And the strange ship wherein we made our voyage,
Our little mortal ship of thoughts and visions
Hangs there, in chains, before the twilit altar.

The doors are locked. The lamp is quenched for ever;
Though, at one corner of the house, our Lady
Looks out, across the valley, to the sea.

And, on the landward side, across a valley,
Purple as grapes in autumn, the dark mountains,
With peaks like broken swords, and splintered helmets,
Remembering Roland's death, are listening still.

Look down, look down, upon the sunlit valley,
Over the low white parapet of that garden;
And you shall see the long grey road go winding
Through the Basque vineyards . . .

But you shall not see
One face, nor shall you hear one voice that whispered
Love, as it died. . . .
Only one wooden Image
Knows where she knelt, among the lonely mountains
At Roncesvalles, in one last prayer for me.

* * * * *

And, when it was darkest, I came to a strong City.
No earthly tongue can tell how I journeyed there,
Deaf to this world's compassion,
Blind to its pity,
With a heart wrung empty, even of its last dumb prayer.

I had left the chattering throngs in the night behind me,
And stumbled into a desert that had no name.
Torn, bleeding of foot,
Through cactus and thorn I stumbled,
And, when it was darkest, to that strong City I came.

Gate there was none, nor window. It towered above me
Like a vast fortress into the midnight sky.
And I beat on the granite walls,
But I found no doorway;
And the blood ran over my wrists, but I heard no reply.

Yet—I knew well—no tongue can tell how I knew it—
Though the walls were harder than adamant, blacker than night,
Within that City
Was glory beyond all glory
Of wisdom and power enthroned in absolute light.

Could I have entered there, all doubt were over.
Stones would be bread at last, and water wine;

All questioning closed
In absolute vision;
The long sad riddle solved, and the answer mine.

But oh, on those cloud-wreathed walls, there stood no sentry.
Naked as cliffs they towered, abrupt as doom.
No shining gateway,
No shadowy postern,
No least small spark of a window broke their gloom.

Hour after hopeless hour I groped around them.
League after league, I followed that girdling wall.
Burning with thirst,
I dragged through the drifted sand-heaps
Round its great coigns, and found them adamant all.

Once, every league, a shadowy buttress
Like a vast Sphinx, outstretched in the moon's pale sheen,
Loomed through the night,
With flanks worn sleek by the sand-storms,
And calm strange face that gazed as at worlds unseen.

I groped around them; I groped around them;
Stared up at their cold eyes and found them stone;
And crawled on, on,
Till I overtook strange foot-prints
Going my way, and knew them for my own;

Strange foot-prints, clotted with blood, in the sand before me,
Trailing the hopeless way I had trailed before;
For, in that night,
I had girdled the whole dark City,
Feeling each adamant inch, and found no door.

I fell on my face in the rank salt of the desert.
 Slow, hot, like blood, out of my hopeless eyes,
The salt tears bled.
The salt of the desert drank them,
 And I cried, once, to God, as a child cries.

Then, then, I cannot tell
What strange thing happened,
 Only, as at a breath of the midnight air,
These eyes, like two staunched wounds, had ceased their bleeding
 And my despair had ended my despair.

Far over the desert, like shadows trailed by a moon-cloud,
 I saw a train of mourners, two by two,
Following an open coffin.
 They halted near me.
And I beheld, once more, the face I knew.

Blissful the up-turned face—the cold hands folded,
 Blissful the up-turned face, cold as cold stone,
Cold as a midnight flower.
 I bent above it—
Sweet, sweet cold kiss, the saddest earth had known.

Quietly they moved on, in slow procession.
 They breathed no prayer. They sang no funeral song.
Up to the adamant walls
 Of that strong City,
Slowly they moved, a strange inscrutable throng.

Behind their shining burden they stole like shadows
 Up to the shadowy City, two by two.
And like two ponderous doors of a tomb revolving
 Two stones in the wall swung back,
 And they passed through.

I followed after. I followed after.
Theirs was the secret key, and the sure goal:
And the adamant doors
Revolved again like midnight,
And closed, like a silent thunder, behind my soul.

Dark! It was dark; but through that strange new darkness
Great aisles of beauty rapturously burned;
And I stole on,
Like a remembering pilgrim
From a long exile now at last returned.

All round me burned strange lights and banners.
Above, great arches grasped and spanned the sky.
Then, like a bell,
In the armoured hands of Michael,
I heard Time ring its aeons out and die.

I saw that strange procession winding
On through a veil that shielded my dazed sight
From the absolute Dark that would have drowned me
At the first dreadful touch of absolute Light.

Yet I saw glory on glory on glory
Burning through those ethereal folds
Dusked by a myriad dawns, a myriad sunsets
With smouldering mercies, merciful blood-red golds.

Before it smoked the Eternal Altar
Branched with great trembling lights that shone
As though at last all stars, all constellations,
Had swung to their true place before God's throne.

There, there, at last, they burned in order,
 Round that high Altar, under that rich East.
All clouds, all snows, on that pure Table
 Were spread like one white cloth for God's own feast.

And I heard *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*,
 Dominus Deus, echoing everywhere,
In tongues of earth, in tongues of ocean,
 In tongues of fire, in tongues of air.

Far off, I heard once more the centuries pealing
 Like one brief sacring bell, I heard Time die.
I saw Space fading, forms dissolving.
 I saw the Host uplifted high.

Spirit and Substance, Victim-Victor,
 One life in all, all lives in One,
Fast-bound to feed man's bounded vision
 Shone through that strict concentring Sun.

Anima Mundi, World-Sustainer,
 Sower to whom all seeds returned,
Through earth's dissolving mist of atoms
 The Body of God in splendour burned.

And I heard *Agnus*, *Agnus Dei*,
 Pleading for man with Love's own breath;
And Love drew near me,
 And Love drew near me
And I drank Life through God's own death.

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